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REVOLT OF THE TARTARS

*OR FLIGHT OF THE KALMUCK KHAN AND HIS
PEOPLE FROM THE RUSSIAN TERRITORIES
TO THE FRONTIERS OF CHINA*

THOMAS DE QUINCEY

EDITED FOR SCHOOL USE

BY

CHARLES W. FRENCH

PRINCIPAL NORMAL PRACTICE SCHOOL CHICAGO, ILL.

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CONTENTS.

Biographical Sketch of De Quincey	5
De Quincey's Characteristics as a Writer . . .	17
Introduction	25
Bibliography of Biographical and Critical Works relating to De Quincey	31
Suggestive Questions	32
Revolt of the Tartars	35
Glossary	119



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DE QUINCEY

Thomas De Quincey, born in Manchester, England, August 15, 1785, was the second son and fifth child of a merchant of some wealth and culture. His father died when he was seven years old, leaving him to the joint guardianship of his mother and four old friends of the family. For several years his education was directed by one of these guardians, a curate in charge of a Manchester parish, who laid the foundation for those classical studies in which De Quincey afterwards became so proficient. As a part of his system of training the curate required his charge to attend the Sunday services, and to write out an abstract of the sermon, which was afterwards compared with the original and mercilessly criticised. Although this exercise developed a power of attention and memory which in later years became a marked feature of De Quincey's intellectual life, at the time the nervous boy found it dull and irksome.

In the *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*

De Quincey refers to this weekly task as follows:

“Every Sunday, duly as it revolved, brought with it this cruel anxiety. On Saturday night under sad anticipation, on Sunday night under sadder experimental knowledge of my trying task, I slept ill; my pillow was stuffed with thorns; and until Monday morning’s inspection had dismissed me from parade to ‘stand at ease,’ verily, I felt like a false steward summoned to some killing audit. * * * To the very last, I found no ease at all in this weekly task, which never ceased to be a thorn in the flesh; and I believe that my guardian, like many of the grim Pagan divinities, inhaled a flavor of fragrant incense from the fretting and stinging of anxiety which, as it were some holy vestal fire, he kept alive by this periodic exaction. It gave him pleasure that he could reach me in the very recesses of my dreams, where even a Pariah might look for rest; so that the Sunday, which to man, and even to the brutes within his gates, offered an interval of rest, for me was signalized as a day of martyrdom. Yet in this, after all, it is possible that he did me a service; for my constitutional infirmity of mind ran but too determinately towards the sleep of endless reverie, and of dreamy abstraction from life and its realities.”

Some years after his father’s death, his mother moved to Bath, where he entered the Grammar School. But, as his work proved unsatisfactory, he was soon removed to a private school in Wiltshire. Three years later he was sent back to Manchester to attend the celebrated Grammar School there. The Grammar Schools of those days occupied a

position in the educational system of England somewhat similar to that held by the High Schools in America today. They were preparatory schools for the great Universities, and their graduates (even if they did not attend any higher institution) were considered well educated. The course of work in these schools included a thorough and comprehensive training in the classical languages and literatures, and not very much besides. For such a training De Quincey was peculiarly apt. From the beginning of his school career he maintained a high standard as a classical scholar. He became as familiar with Latin and Greek as with his native tongue, and gained a reputation for the facility with which he wrote verses in Latin and compositions in Greek.

He was, however, far from being contented. His health was never robust, and by close confinement and the consequent lack of exercise he became much depressed both physically and mentally. The daily unvarying routine of school-life was distasteful to him in the extreme. He felt that no appeal that he could make would serve to abate the rigid discipline and, as he believed, the senseless tyranny of the school. Moreover, he was too proud to appeal to his guardians, feeling, with

some reason, that his case would be misunderstood. Therefore, after brooding long over the matter, he determined upon a step which was destined to be the beginning of his strangely eccentric career, and at the same time to estrange him permanently from his family and friends, none of whom had ever had much patience with his so-called freaks. This step was to turn his back upon his miseries and run away from school. In his *Confessions*, he dwells upon this episode of his early life with much pathos. He says:

“At length, all was ready; Midsummer, like an army with banners, was moving through the heavens; already the longest day had passed; those arrangements, few and imperfect, through which I attempted some partial evasion of disagreeable contingencies likely to arise, had been finished; what more remained for me to do of things that I was able to do? None; and yet, though at last free to move off, I lingered; lingered, as under some sense of dim perplexity, or even of relenting love for the very captivity itself which I was making so violent an effort to abjure—what I was hastening to desert, nevertheless I grieved to desert. * * * The morning came which was to launch me into the world; that morning from which, and from its consequences, my whole succeeding life has, in many important points, taken its coloring. At half after three I rose, and gazed with deep emotion at the ancient collegiate church, ‘dressed in earliest light,’ and beginning to crimson with the deep lustre of a cloudless July morning.

I was firm and immovable in my purpose, but yet agitated by anticipation of uncertain danger and troubles. To this agitation, the deep peace of the morning presented an affecting contrast, and, in some degree, a medicine. * * * I dressed myself, took my hat and gloves, and lingered a little in the room. For nearly a year and a half, this room had been my 'pensive citadel;' here I had read and studied through all the hours of night; and, though true it was that, for the latter part of this time, I had lost my gaiety and peace of mind during the strife and fever of contention with my guardian, yet, on the other hand, as a boy passionately fond of books and dedicated to intellectual pursuits, I could not fail to have enjoyed many happy hours in the midst of general dejection. * * * I waited until I saw the trunk placed upon a wheelbarrow, and on its road to the carriers; then, 'with Providence my guide,' or more truly, it might be said, with my own headstrong folly for law and impulse, I set off on foot; carrying a small parcel with some articles of dress under my arm, a favorite English poet in one pocket, and an odd volume, containing about one-half of Canter's 'Euripides,' in the other."

He turned his steps homeward in order to relieve the anxiety of his friends in regard to his whereabouts, but was coldly received by his mother, who could not understand the peculiarities of her son's disposition, and blamed him bitterly for his waywardness. He was finally given a small allowance, and set adrift to wander wherever his caprice might lead him. He made his way to Wales, where he

spent some weeks; a part of the time in the villages, and a part in the picturesque solitudes of the mountains and forests. But he soon tired of this life, and turned his restless steps towards London, where he hoped to find a career, but more especially means to raise money upon his expectations. His hopes, however, were not realized, for neither career nor money came to him, and he entered upon a life of destitution and vagabondage, from which he was finally rescued by his friends, and sent to Oxford.

His university life extended from 1803 to 1809. Though an irregular and fitful student, he seemed never to tire of classical studies, in which he especially excelled. He was an omnivorous and thoughtful reader, straying at will through the broad fields of literature, thus laying the foundations of that familiarity with the various departments of learning which, in later years, enabled him to write upon numerous themes of widely diverse natures. As he withdrew himself almost wholly from the social life of the university, he made but few friends, and gained for himself the reputation of a recluse. Much of his work was brilliant, but he seemed wholly indifferent to any honor or credit which he might gain by it, and

finally left the university almost as abruptly as he had left the Manchester Grammar School, without presenting himself for the degree to which he was probably entitled.

During his Oxford life, he became addicted to the use of opium, which, in ignorance of its dangerous nature, he took at first to relieve attacks of severe pain, to which he was subject. Charmed by its almost magical influence, he soon yielded himself a willing slave to the potent drug, which was destined to be the inspiration of one of the most brilliant literary works in the English language, *The Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*. He had been suffering severely from neuralgia, and was advised to take a dose of laudanum. He says:

“I took it; and in an hour—oh, heavens! what a revulsion! what an upheaving, from its lowest depths, of the inner spirit! what an apocalypse of the world within me! That my pains had vanished was now a trifle in my eyes; this negative effect was swallowed up in the immensity of those positive effects which had opened before me, in the abyss of divine enjoyment thus suddenly revealed. Here was a panacea for all human woes; here was the secret of happiness, about which philosophers had disputed for so many ages, at once discovered; happiness might now be bought for a penny, and carried in the waistcoat pocket; portable ecstasies might now be corked up in a pint bottle; and peace of mind could be sent down in gallons by the

mail coach. But, if I talk in this way, the reader will think I am laughing; and I can assure him that nobody will laugh long who deals much with opium; its pleasures even are of a grave and solemn complexion; and in his happiest state, the opium eater cannot present himself in the character of *L'Allegro*; even then he speaks and thinks as becomes *Il Penseroso*."

From this moment, he was never without a supply of the fascinating and deadly drug in some form. At times he gave himself wholly over to its influence, taking quantities which seem almost incredible. Then, for a time, he would summon all his energies, and break the chains which bound him, only to yield again to the tempter. In his later life, however, he reduced the daily doses to such an extent that he was free from its worst effects.

He early became a great admirer of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and had, when he left Oxford, long cherished the hope that he might at some time be admitted to the circle of their friends. This wish was finally gratified, and he entered upon terms of intimacy with both of these poets. At the age of twenty-four he went to live in the famous lake region, where he rented the cottage known as Grasmere, which for eight years had been the home of Wordsworth. The latter now lived at the

other end of the lake and his house became a centre for the meetings of Southey, Coleridge and De Quincey. For more than twenty years, this place, in one of the most charming sections of England, was De Quincey's home. During this time his life was made up of periods of hard study alternating with periods of dissipation in which he freely indulged his appetite and passed through the horrors and beatific visions which he has so vividly described in his writings.

In 1816 he married Margaret Simpson, the beautiful daughter of a neighboring farmer, who tenderly and unselfishly devoted her life to his service. For a time after his marriage he reduced his "daily rations" of opium from eight thousand to one thousand drops. The effect of this comparative abstinence was magical. "The cloud of profoundest melancholy which had rested on his brain passed away." For a year, he resisted his imperious demon successfully. "It was a year," says he, "of brilliant water (to speak after the manner of jewelers), set, as it were, and insulated in the gloomy umbrage of opium." But, after this all too short period, he returned to his old habits, and in the succeeding months he sank into the deepest gloom and horror of his life. So dark

were the memories of these years that when he comes to write of them in his *Autobiography* he says :

“But now farewell, a long farewell to happiness, Winter or Summer! Farewell to smiles and laughter! Farewell to peace of mind! Farewell to hope and tranquil dreams, and to the blessed consolations of sleep! For more than three years and a half I am summoned away from these; I am now arrived at the Iliad of woes.”

Fortunately for him, his inheritance was not large enough to provide for his family, and his necessities compelled him once more to curb his passion, and to turn to his pen for a livelihood. He soon became a constant contributor to the *London Magazine*, and later to *Blackwood's*, and to numerous other less prominent periodicals. In the first-named magazine appeared from time to time installments of his *Confessions* which attracted wide attention, and at once brought him literary fame and an increasing demand for his productions. Although his health was poor, he managed to produce a great amount and variety of literary work upon a surprisingly wide range of subjects, in each of which he proved himself not only an authority, but also a master.

To be near the literary centre, he went to London. There he lived for some years in bachelor

quarters, with only an occasional visit to Grasmere, where his family still resided. His life was, as usual, a retired one. Yet, when he could be enticed from his lonely rooms to grace society, he entranced everyone. His personal appearance was not prepossessing, and he was as careless of his clothing as Demosthenes is said to have been, yet, like the Grecian philosopher, when he began to speak, his physical defects and his eccentricities were forgotten under the magnetic influence of his real self. His manners were charming, and his conversation brilliant. A contemporary speaks enthusiastically of his talk, "its sweet and subtle ripple of anecdote and suggestion, and its witching splendor."

The popularity of his writings soon became so great that certain Scotch publishers offered inducements which finally led him to transfer his activities from London to Edinburgh, where he spent the remainder of his life. Soon after his removal, his wife having died, he rented a cottage in the beautiful suburb of Lasswade, in which he installed his family. He himself retained his quarters in the city, and, although he frequently visited his children, the care of the family devolved upon his oldest daughter. He avoided, so far as possible, all association with his fellow-men, and

his only diversion from his exhausting literary work came from long country walks, in which he especially delighted. In such fashion, his lonely life continued until his death, December 8, 1859.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

- 1785. Born August 15, in Manchester.
- 1799 (aged 14). At school in Bath.
- 1801 (aged 16). At school in Manchester.
- 1802 (aged 17). Runs away from school, and wanders in Wales.
- 1803 (aged 18). Enters Oxford University.
- 1804 (aged 19). Begins to use opium.
- 1809 (aged 24). Rents the Wordsworth cottage in Grasmere.
- 1816 (aged 31). Marries Miss Margaret Simpson.
- 1819 (aged 34). Begins to write for the *Quarterly Review*.
- 1821 (aged 36). In London. His family in Grasmere. Writes *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*, which are published in the *London Magazine*.
- 1826 (aged 41). Writes for *Blackwood's Magazine*.
- 1830 (aged 45). Removes to Edinburgh.
- 1837 (aged 52). His wife dies.
- 1840 (aged 55). Establishes his family in Lasswade.
- 1859 (aged 74). Dies, December 8.

DE QUINCEY'S CHARACTERISTICS AS A WRITER.

It may be said of De Quincey, as it has been said of Browning, that his writings form a literature in themselves. Few writers, since the time of Aristotle, have covered so broad a field, and fewer still have been so thoroughly at home in every field of human thought and investigation. A mere glance at the table of contents of his collected works will reveal the versatility of his genius, and the breadth, if not the depth, of his learning. A single volume of his historical essays and researches contains such diverse titles as *The Casuistry of Roman Meals*, *The Pagan Oracles*, *The Essenes*, *Secret Societies*, *Greece under the Romans* and *The Suliotes*. It is a far cry from the mysticism of his unearthly romances to the logical reasoning of his philosophical essays, and it is hardly possible to conceive of a greater contrast than that which exists between the humor and sarcasm of such essays as the one entitled *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts*, and the pathos and emotion which characterize *The Military Nun*, *Joan of Arc*, and *Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrow*. Side by side in his works appear sober biographical and historical essays, and sketches of the most purely imaginative nature, such as *The*

Daughter of Lebanon, The Vision of Sudden Death, and the Dream Fugue. From the highest flight of imagination he could descend to questions of scholarship which were little short of freaks, as is well illustrated by the contrast between such works as *The Avenger*, and *The Toilette of a Hebrew Lady*. He ranges the earth, the sky, and the human heart, and, to develop their hidden possibilities, he uses, with equal grace and power, wit, humor, pathos, passion, imagination, and all the arts of clear, strong and picturesque expression.

He was pre-eminently a magazine writer, for he never wrote a book, and his works to-day consist of a compilation of innumerable articles collected from the various periodicals to which he contributed. Under such circumstances, sustained and exhaustive thought along any single line of inquiry was impossible, yet little of his work is fragmentary or unfinished. He wrote upon widely diverse subjects, yet he avoided the superficiality, which is usually the result of ranging over so wide a field, by his persistent reading, his retentive memory, and the originality and vigor of his intellectual powers.

Both in style and thought, he was much influenced by his intimate acquaintance with the classical languages and literatures, and he attained more fully than any other English author the majesty and grace of the great masters of classical prose. He not only copies closely the great models of

antiquity in thought and style, but he also quotes freely from these sources, so that the student will find himself constantly surrounded by landmarks of Greece and Rome.

De Quincey's diction was highly ornate. The pages of his writings are thickly strewn with figures of speech. He uses metaphors, tropes, personifications, synecdoches, metonymies, and many others. His sentences are frequently long and involved. He makes an excessive use of Latinized and technical terms, yet his meaning is generally clear. His expression is always exact, and his style smooth and beautiful.

Two quotations from well-known critics will perhaps give a clear idea of De Quincey's merits. Minto says:

"The melody of De Quincey's prose is pre-eminently rich and stately. He takes rank with Milton as one of our greatest masters of stately cadence, as well as of sublime composition. If one may trust one's ear for a general impression, Milton's melody is sweeter and more varied; but for magnificent effects, at least in prose, the palm must be assigned to De Quincey. In some of De Quincey's grandest passages, the language can be compared only to the swell and crash of an orchestra. It need hardly be added that the harmony between his rhythm and his subject-matter is most striking in the sublime flights."

Note.—The student is referred to Minto's *Manual of English Prose Literature* for a fuller discussion of De Quincey's style.

What Corson says in *The Aims of Literary Study*, is even more to the point:

“For range of power, for great diversity of subject, for poetic, philosophic, and logical cast of mind, for depth of feeling, for an inspiring vitality of thinking, for periodic and impassioned prose, which, running through the whole gamut of expression, is unequaled in English literature, no more educating author could be selected for advanced students than Thomas De Quincey. A good education in the language as a living organism could be got through his writings alone; and his wealth and vitality of thought and feeling could hardly fail, unless opposed by extraordinary obtuseness, to excite and enliven, and strengthen the best faculties of thought and feeling in any reader.”

The student will also be interested in De Quincey's own classification of his writings. He says:

“Taking as the basis of my remarks the collective American edition, I will here attempt a rude general classification of all the articles which compose it. I distribute them grossly into three classes:

First, into that class which proposes primarily to amuse the reader; but which, in doing so, may or may not happen occasionally to reach a higher station, at which the amusement passes into an impassioned interest. Some papers are merely playful; but others have a mixed character. These present *Autobiographic Sketches* illustrate what I mean. Generally, they pretend to but little beyond that sort of amusement which attaches to any real story, thoughtfully and faithfully related, moving through a succession of scenes sufficiently

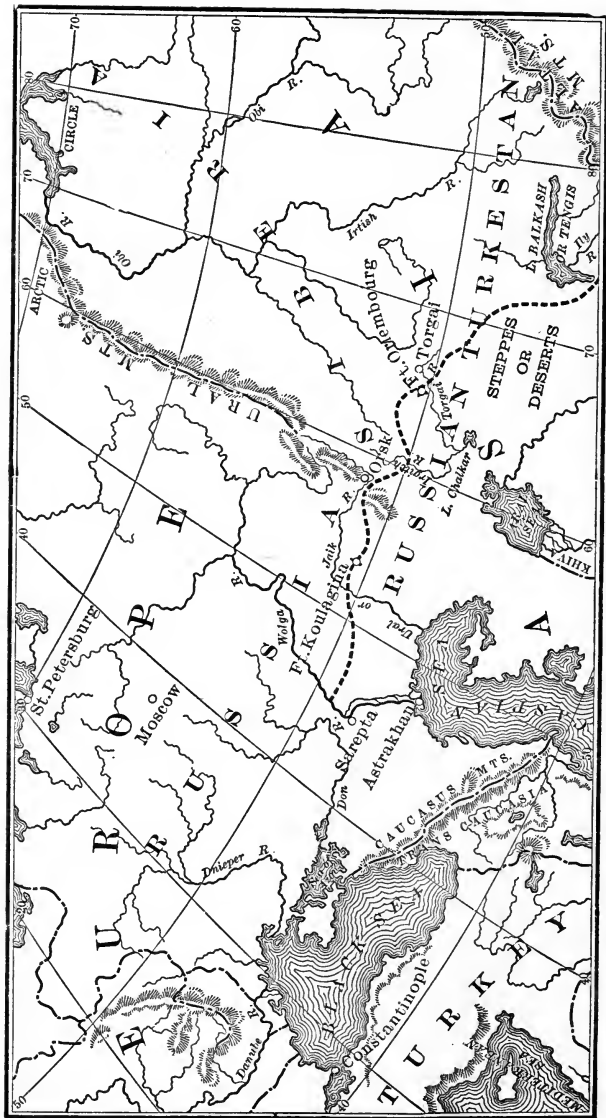
varied, that are not suffered to remain too long before the eye, and that connect themselves at every stage with intellectual objects. But, even here, I do not scruple to claim from the reader, occasionally, a higher consideration. At times, the narrative rises into a far higher key.

Into the second class, I throw those papers which address themselves purely to the understanding as an insulated faculty, or do so primarily. Let me call them by the general name of essays. These, as in other cases of the same kind, must have their value measured by two separate questions. A, What is the problem, and of what rank in dignity or use, which the essay undertakes? And next, that point being settled, B, What is the success obtained? And (as a separate question), What is the executive ability displayed in the solution of the problem? This latter question is naturally no question for myself, as the answer would involve a verdict upon my own merit. But, generally, there will be quite enough in the answer to question A, for establishing the value of any essay upon the soundest basis. Skillfully to frame your question, is half way towards insuring the true answer. Two or three of the problems treated in these essays, I will here rehearse" [De Quincey here cites, as examples of the kind of writings to which he refers in the second class, his essays upon the following subjects: *Essenism*, *The Caesars*, and *Cicero*]. "These specimens are sufficient for the purpose of informing the reader that I do not write without a thoughtful consideration of my subject; and, also, that to think reasonably upon any question, has never been allowed by me as a sufficient ground for writing upon it unless I believed myself able to offer some considerable novelty. Generally,

I claim (not arrogantly, but with firmness), the merit of rectification applied to absolute errors, or to injurious limitations of the truth.

Finally, as a third class, and in virtue of their aim, as a far higher class of compositions, included in the American collection, I rank the *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, and, also, but more emphatically, the *Suspiria de Profundis*. On these, as modes of impassioned prose, ranging under no precedents that I am aware of in any literature, it is much more difficult to speak justly, whether in a hostile or friendly character. As yet, neither of these two works has ever received the least degree of that correction and pruning which both require so extensively; and of the *Suspiria*, not more than perhaps one-third has yet been printed. When both have been fully revised, I shall feel myself entitled to ask for a more determinate adjudication upon their claims as works of art. At present, I feel authorized to make haughtier pretensions in right of their *conception* than I shall venture to do, under peril of being supposed to characterize their *execution*. Two remarks only I shall address to the equity of my reader: First, I desire to remind him of the perilous difficulty besieging all attempts to clothe in words the visionary scenes derived from the world of dreams, where a single false note, a single word in a wrong key, ruins the whole music; and, secondly, I desire him to consider the utter sterility of universal literature in this one department of impassioned prose, which certainly argues some singular difficulty, suggesting a singular duty of indulgence in criticising any attempt that even imperfectly succeeds. The sole *Confessions*, belonging to past times, that have at all succeeded in engaging the

attention of men, are those of St. Augustine and of Rousseau. The very idea of breathing a record of human passion, not into the ear of the random crowd, but of the saintly confessional, argues an impassioned theme. Impassioned, therefore, should be the tenor of the composition. Now, in St. Augustine's *Confessions* is found one most impassioned passage, viz., the lamentation for the death of his youthful friend, in the fourth book; one, and no more. Farther, there is nothing. In Rousseau, there is not even so much. In the whole work, there is nothing grandly affecting but the character and the inexplicable misery of the writer."



MAP ILLUSTRATING THE FLIGHT OF A TARTAR TRIBE, - - - - SHOWING SUPPOSED ROUTE.

THE REVOLT OF A TARTAR TRIBE.

De Quincey's historical essays are written mainly upon topics which fall outside the range of the ordinary reader, and many of them required much patient research for their preparation. *The Revolt of a Tartar Tribe* is a case in point. It deals with an obscure Tartar tribe located in the midst of the vast expanse of the Russian Empire, and surrounded by other tribes of rival, often hostile, and always uncivilized people. Too small a unit in the constitution of Russia to enter conspicuously into its annals, its history, if written at all, is so entangled in the vague and untrustworthy traditions of the various countries with which it had allied itself from time to time, that to write anything like a connected account, even of a single decade in its life, seemed almost a hopeless task. Yet, to De Quincey, the theme was a peculiarly attractive one. The meteoric flight of a nation across the breadth of a continent, opposed by the most stupendous natural obstacles, and beset by a savage foe, is one of the most spectacular events in all history, and it appealed with great force to his romantic nature. Accordingly, the narrative is

Note.—This sketch first appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* for July, 1837.

that of no mere chronicler. Although the main facts are authentic, they are treated with the warm sympathy of the romancer, rather than with the cold impartiality of the historian. In strength of portrayal and vividness of coloring, if not in accuracy of historic statement, it excels the *Anabasis* of Xenophon, the only classic with which it may be compared on anything like equal terms. Such a piece of work must be studied, not merely for its thought, but also as an illustration of the genius of its author and his wonderful power of expression.

A brief sketch of the various barbarian tribes, pursuers, and pursued, which appear in the essay, is placed here that the pupil may not be obliged to stop in the course of his reading to discover who are the Kalmucks, and who are the various tribes, Cossacks, Bashkirs, and Kirghises, which hang upon the outskirts of the fleeing nation. There is not room to give a connected account of all these tribes of Asiatic origin to whom De Quincey refers, but sufficient information is given below to enable the student to follow the narrative intelligently. For further study, see "*Tartars*," in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, or Howerth's *History of the Mongols*.

From the early part of the Christian era to the end of the Middle Ages, Europe was repeatedly invaded by vast hordes of barbarians from the central and eastern parts of Asia. Under various

names, such as Mongols, Tartars, Turks, and Huns, they overran eastern and central Europe, devastated the country, and plundered and murdered its inhabitants. Even Rome itself, triumphant over every other foe, was forced to yield its supremacy to their undisciplined power. Although a nomadic people, with restless and wandering dispositions, many of them settled in Europe, and gradually became a part of its fixed population. Their descendants are found, to some extent, in many countries, but are settled mainly in Russia, Turkey, Poland, and Hungary. Of their tribal names, the most important for us is the word Tartar, because De Quincey, perhaps erroneously, calls the Kalmuck tribe whose flight he records, the Torgot-Tartars.

- 1 The word *Tah-tar* was first applied to those Mongolian tribes, which in early times descended from the Altai plateaus into the Chinese lowlands, to plunder their peaceful inhabitants. When Genghis Khan, in the thirteenth century, brought these tribes under his sway, and led them into Europe, they were given the name of Tartar, with an allusion, perhaps, to the Tartarus of the
- 2 ancients. This invasion of the Mongol-Tartars was probably the most gigantic warlike movement in all history. Beginning with Chinese Tartary, they overran nearly all of habitable Asia, and extended their conquests westward into Europe as far as Poland, adding nearly all of Russia to their

dominions. No nation or city was powerful enough to resist their onset, and their victories were never complete until the opposing forces were utterly annihilated. They swept away rich and populous cities and depopulated vast tracts of land, in order, as they said, that their flocks and herds might freely feed upon grass whose green was free from dusty feet. From 1211 to 1223, no less than eighteen millions of people perished at their hands in China alone. But finally, as was natural, their vast empire fell to pieces, and the various Tartar tribes became almost inextricably mixed with other nations. Accordingly, in the present use of the word Tartar, there is much confusion. R. G. Latham, in *The Nationalities of Europe*, says: "The populations in question (the remnants, in southern Russia and Siberia, of the great Mongol empire), belong to one of three great groups, stocks or families—the Turk, the Mongol, or the Tungus. When we speak of a Tartar, he belongs to the first; whenever we speak of a Kalmuck, he belongs to the second of these divisions." In general, it may be said, that the name Tartar belongs to nearly three million inhabitants of the Russian Empire, who are remnants of the great Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century.

Apparently, the tribe called Kalmucks, or 3
Torgot-Tartars, whose exodus De Quincey records, are Mongols, not Tartars. But the question is so confused that it is perhaps best to remember

merely that they are certainly Asiatics, and closely allied to the Tartars. The name Kalmuck means renegade. It is at present applied to a Mongolian or Mongol-Tartar people who inhabit large regions of the Chinese and Russian dominions. They are a nomadic race, and possess considerable wealth in herds of cattle, horses, sheep, and camels. There are, of course, many Kalmuck tribes. The tribe which forms the subject of this sketch originally inhabited the district between the desert of Gobi and Lake Tengis, in central Asia. In 1636 about two hundred thousand men and women left their homes, and migrated to the great steppes which border upon the Volga River. For a time, they maintained a desultory warfare with their neighbors; but in 1655 they passed, of their own accord, under the Russian authority. Several times they furnished important contingents to the Russian armies, but were always regarded with suspicion by the rulers of their adopted country. During the reign of Catherine they became so excited by their wrongs, real or imaginary, that they determined upon the great migration which De Quincey has so splendidly pictured in this sketch.

In pursuit of the fleeing tribes, the Russian government started not only a Russian army, but also a vast horde of semi-civilized tribes, whose land bordered on those of the Kalmucks, and who had, for the unfortunate fugitives a fierce, hereditary

7 hatred. The most notable among them were the Cossacks, who though of doubtful origin, are 4 probably descendants of the Russian refugees who fled to the swamps at the mouth of the Don, to escape the Mongols when the latter invaded the country in the thirteenth century. These refugees, however, afterwards became amalgamated with the Tartars and Kalmucks, and became almost as lawless, desperate and nomadic as their conquerors. They now form a restless and warlike race, whose subjugation by Russia extended through centuries, and left them with many special privileges. They are skillful horsemen, and form the larger part of the Russian cavalry.

The Bashkirs (Baash-Keerz), the second set of 5 barbarian pursuers, are a Tartar-Finnish race, who inhabit the slopes of the Ural Mountains, and the adjacent plains. Originally they formed a powerful independent state, but submitted to Russia in 1556, and were incorporated in her dominions.

To them and to the Cossacks Russia joined the Kirghises, a race of Mongol-Tartars, who occu- 6 pied a vast territory stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Altai Mountains. They were a nomadic people, and, at the beginning of the present century, well merited the title of the "slave hunters of the steppes," from their custom of attacking caravans, and selling their prisoners as slaves.

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CRITICAL WORKS RELATING
TO DE QUINCEY.

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NOTE—The collected works of Thomas De Quincey are published in a series of fourteen volumes by Macmillan & Co. They have been carefully edited by Professor David Masson.

SUGGESTIVE QUESTIONS.

The following questions are mere indications of lines of study which may be extended as far as time serves:

1. State briefly the leading events in De Quincy's life.
2. Mention some of his personal peculiarities.
3. Would these peculiarities influence his writings? If so, in what way?
4. What purpose did he seem to have in mind in writing the *Tartar Tribe*?
5. What are some of the characteristics of his style as they appear in this essay?
6. Is there an unusual number of long words? From what language are the most of these words derived?
7. What qualities does his choice of words impart to his writings?
8. Have you noticed any words which are used in an unusual sense? If so, can you in each case state whether this is the primitive meaning?
9. Select several sentences in which words of classical origin predominate. Substitute for these words, Anglo-Saxon expressions. Is there any gain? any loss?
10. Do you notice any peculiarities of sentence-

structure? If so, what are they? How do they affect the meaning?

11. Is the following quotation a good estimate of De Quincey's sentences? "His (De Quincey's) sentences are stately and elaborate, crowded with qualifying clauses and parenthetical allusions to a degree unparalleled among modern writers."—*Minto*. Cite instances supporting your view.

12. Does this tendency to discursiveness result in a sacrifice of unity, clearness or strength in De Quincey's sentences? Cite examples in support of your conclusion.

13. How would you characterize the author's powers of description as used in this essay?

14. Would you accept the story as authentic history, or has the author allowed his imagination to color and distort the facts? Support your judgment in this matter by citations.

15. What passage do you consider the most effective? Why?

16. Do you think the style of the author well adapted to historical writing? Give reasons for your answer.

17. Does this essay give you any suggestion as to the personality of the writer?

18. Is it possible to divide this essay into introduction, body of the work, and conclusion? If so, indicate these divisions.

19. What purpose does the introduction serve? Does it give any outline of the thought? Does

it in any way appeal to the sympathies of the reader?

20. Make a brief outline of the body of the work.

21. Examine carefully the paragraph structure with reference to unity, clearness, strength, and coherence. Is the central idea of each paragraph clearly brought out, or is it obscured by comparatively irrelevant sentences? Is the transition from one paragraph to another generally abrupt, or is it easy and harmonious?

22. Do you observe any passages which seem to be thrown in merely for effect?

23. What does the author attempt to do in the conclusion? Does he recapitulate the narrative, or does he strive in some other way to leave a strong impression on the mind of the reader?

24. How is the conclusion related to the rest of the essay?

25. After your study of this essay, do you conclude that the author intended it to be a real contribution to historical literature, or did he write it merely to interest and amuse his readers?

26. What have you gained from the study of this essay?

REVOLT OF THE TARTARS

OR, FLIGHT OF THE KALMUCK KHAN AND HIS PEOPLE
FROM THE RUSSIAN TERRITORIES TO THE
FRONTIERS OF CHINA.

There is no great event in modern history, or, perhaps it may be said more broadly, none in all history from its earliest records, less generally known, or more striking to the imagination, than
5 the flight eastwards of a principal Tartar nation across the boundless steppes of Asia in the latter half of the last century. The *terminus a quo* of this flight, and the *terminus ad quem*, are equally magnificent; the mightiest of Christian thrones
10 being the one, the mightiest of pagan the other. And the grandeur of these two terminal objects is harmoniously supported by the romantic circumstances of the flight. In the abruptness of its commencement, and the fierce velocity of its exe-
15 cution, we read the wild barbaric character of those who conducted the movement. In the unity of purpose connecting this myriad of wills, and in the blind but unerring aim at a mark so remote, there is something which recalls to
20 the mind those almighty instincts that propel the migrations of the swallow and the lemming, or the life-withering marches of the locust. Then, again, in the gloomy vengeance of Russia and her

vast artillery, which hung upon the rear and the skirts of the fugitive vassals, we are reminded of Miltonic images—such, for instance, as that of the solitary hand pursuing through desert spaces and through ancient chaos a rebellious host, and over- 5 taking with volleying thunders those who believe themselves already within the security of darkness and of distance.

I shall have occasion, farther on, to compare this event with other great national catastrophes as to 10 the magnitude of the suffering. But it may also challenge a comparison with similar events under another relation, viz., as to its dramatic capabilities. Few cases, perhaps, in romance or history, can sustain a close collation with this as to the 15 *complexity* of its separate interests. The great outline of the enterprise, taken in connection with the operative motives, hidden or avowed, and the religious sanctions under which it was pursued, give to the case a triple character:—First, That of 20 a *conspiracy*, with as close a unity in the incidents, and as much of a personal interest in the moving characters, with fine dramatic contrasts, as belongs to “Venice Preserved,” or to the “Fiesco” of Schiller. Secondly, That of a great *military expedi-* 25 *tion*, offering the same romantic features of vast distances to be traversed, vast reverses to be sustained, untried routes, enemies obscurely ascertained, and hardships too vaguely prefigured, which mark the Egyptian expedition of Cambyzes—which mark 30

the anabasis of the younger Cyrus, and the subsequent retreat of the ten thousand—which mark the Parthian expeditions of the Romans, especially those of Crassus and Julian—or (as more disastrous
5 than any of them, and, in point of space as well as in amount of forces, more extensive) the Russian anabasis and katabasis of Napoleon. Thirdly, that of a religious *Exodus*, authorized by an oracle venerated throughout many nations of Asia—an
10 Exodus, therefore, in so far resembling the great Scriptural Exodus of the Israelites, under Moses and Joshua, as well as in the very peculiar distinction of carrying along with them their entire families, women, children, slaves, their herd of
15 cattle and of sheep, their horses and their camels.

This triple character of the enterprise naturally invests it with a more comprehensive interest. But the dramatic interest which I have ascribed to it, or its fitness for a stage representation, depends
20 partly upon the marked variety and the strength of the personal agencies concerned, and partly upon the succession of scenical situations. Even the steppes, the camels, the tents, the snowy and the sandy deserts, are not beyond the scale of our
25 modern representative powers, as often called into action in the theatres both of Paris and London; and the series of situations unfolded—beginning with the general conflagration on the Wolga—passing thence to the disastrous scenes of the flight
30 (as it *literally* was in its commencement)—to the

Tartar siege of the Russian fortress Koulagina—the bloody engagement with the Cossacks in the mountain passes at Ouchim—the surprisal by the Bashkirs, and the advanced posts of the Russian army at Torgai—the private conspiracy at this point against the Khan—the long succession of running fights—the parting massacres at the Lake of Tengis under the eyes of the Chinese—and finally, the tragical retribution to Zebek-Dorchi at the hunting lodge of the Chinese Emperor;—all these situations communicate a *scenical* animation to the wild romance, if treated dramatically; whilst a higher and a philosophic interest belongs to it as a case of authentic history, commemorating a great revolution for good and for evil in the fortunes of a whole people—a people semi-barbarous, but simple-hearted and of ancient descent.

On the 21st of January, 1761, the young Prince Oubacha assumed the sceptre of the Kalmucks upon the death of his father. Some part of the power attached to this dignity he had already wielded since his fourteenth year, in quality of Vice-Khan, by the express appointment and with the avowed support of the Russian Government. He was now about eighteen years of age, amiable in his personal character, and not without titles to respect in his public character as a sovereign prince. In times more peaceable, and amongst a people more entirely civilized, or more humanized

by religion, it is even probable that he might have discharged his high duties with considerable distinction. But his lot was thrown upon stormy times, and a most difficult crisis amongst tribes
5 whose native ferocity was exasperated by debasing forms of superstition, and by a nationality as well as an inflated conceit of their own merit absolutely unparalleled, whilst the circumstances of their hard and trying position under the jealous *surveillance*
10 of an irresistible lord paramount, in the person of the Russian Czar, gave a fiercer edge to the natural unamiableness of the Kalmuck disposition, and irritated its gloomier qualities into action under the restless impulses of suspicion and permanent
15 distrust. No prince could hope for a cordial allegiance from his subjects or a peaceful reign under the circumstances of the case; for the dilemma in which a Kalmuck ruler stood at present was of this nature: *wanting* the sanction and
20 support of the Czar, he was inevitably too weak from without to command confidence from his subjects, or resistance to his competitors; on the other hand, *with* this kind of support, and deriving his title in any degree from the favor of the Imperial
25 Court, he became almost in that extent an object of hatred at home, and within the whole compass of his own territory. He was at once an object of hatred for the past, being a living monument of national independence ignominiously surrendered,
30 and an object of jealousy for the future, as one

who had already advertised himself to be a fitting tool for the ultimate purposes (whatsoever those might prove to be) of the Russian Court. Coming himself to the Kalmuck sceptre under the heaviest weight of prejudice from the unfortunate circumstances of his position, it might have been expected that Oubacha would have been pre-eminently an object of detestation; for, besides his known dependence upon the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, the direct line of succession had been set aside, and the principle of inheritance violently suspended, in favor of his own father, so recently as nineteen years before the era of his own accession, consequently within the lively remembrance of the existing generation. He therefore, almost equally with his father, stood within the full current of the national prejudices, and might have anticipated the most pointed hostility. But it was not so; such are the caprices in human affairs that he was even, in a moderate sense, popular—a benefit which wore the more cheering aspect, and the promises of permanence, inasmuch as he owed it exclusively to his personal qualities of kindness and affability, as well as to the beneficence of his government. On the other hand, to balance this unlooked-for prosperity at the outset of his reign, he met with a rival in popular favor—almost a competitor—in the person of Zebek-Dorchi, a prince with considerable pretensions to the throne, and perhaps, it might be said, with equal pretensions. Zebek-Dorchi

was a direct descendant of the same royal house as himself, through a different branch. On public grounds, his claim stood, perhaps, on a footing equally good with that of Oubacha, whilst his personal qualities, even in those aspects which seemed to a philosophical observer most odious and repulsive, promised the most effectual aid to the dark purposes of an intriguer or a conspirator, and were generally fitted to win a popular support precisely in those points where Oubacha was most defective. He was much superior in external appearance to his rival on the throne, and so far better qualified to win the good opinion of a semi-barbarous people; whilst his dark intellectual qualities of Machiavelian dissimulation, profound hypocrisy and perfidy which knew no touch of remorse, were admirably calculated to sustain any ground which he might win from the simple-hearted people with whom he had to deal, and from the frank carelessness of his unconscious competitor.

At the very outset of his treacherous career, Zebek-Dorchi was sagacious enough to perceive that nothing could be gained by open declaration of hostility to the reigning prince; the choice had been a deliberate act on the part of Russia, and Elizabeth Petrowna was not the person to recall her own favors with levity or upon slight grounds. Openly, therefore, to have declared his enmity towards his relative on the throne could have had

no effect but that of arming suspicions against his own ulterior purposes in a quarter where it was most essential to his interest that, for the present, all suspicion should be hoodwinked. Accordingly, after much meditation, the course he took for opening his snares was this:—He raised a rumor that his own life was in danger from the plots of several Saissang (that is Kalmuck nobles) who were leagued together under an oath to assassinate him; and immediately after, assuming a well-counterfeited alarm, he fled to Tcherkask, followed by sixty-five tents. From this place he kept up a correspondence with the Imperial Court; and, by way of soliciting his cause more effectually, he soon repaired in person to St. Petersburg. Once admitted to personal conferences with the cabinet, he found no difficulty in winning over the Russian counsels to a concurrence with some of his political views, and thus covertly introducing the point of that wedge which was finally to accomplish his purposes. In particular, he persuaded the Russian Government to make a very important alteration in the constitution of the Kalmuck State Council which in effect reorganized the whole political condition of the state, and disturbed the balance of power as previously adjusted. Of this council—in the Kalmuck language called Sarga—there were eight members, called Sargatchi; and hitherto it had been the custom that these eight members should be entirely subordinate to the

Khan; holding, in fact, the ministerial character of secretaries and assistants, but in no respect acting as co-ordinate authorities. That had produced some inconveniences in former reigns; and it was
5 easy for Zebek-Dorchi to point the jealousy of the Russian Court to others more serious, which might arise in future circumstances of war or other contingencies. It was resolved, therefore, to place the Sargatchi henceforwards on a footing of perfect
10 independence, and therefore (as regarded responsibility) on a footing of equality with the Khan. Their independence, however, had respect only to their own sovereign; for towards Russia they were placed in a new attitude of direct duty and account-
15 ability by the creation in their favor of small pensions (300 roubles a year), which, however, to a Kalmuck of that day were more considerable than might be supposed, and had a farther value as marks of honorary distinction emanating from a
20 great empress. Thus far the purposes of Zebek-Dorchi were served effectually for the moment; but apparently it was only for the moment; since, in the further development of his plots, this very dependency upon Russian influence would be the
25 most serious obstacle in his way. There was, however, another point carried which outweighed all inferior considerations, as it gave him a power of setting aside discretionally whatsoever should arise

LINE 7.—**Other contingencies.** To what contingencies does the author here refer?

to disturb his plots; he was himself appointed President and Controller of the Sargatchi. The Russian Court had been aware of his high pretensions by birth, and hoped by this promotion to satisfy the ambition which, in some degree, was acknowledged to be a reasonable passion for any man occupying his situation. 5

Having thus completely blindfolded the Cabinet of Russia, Zebek-Dorchi proceeded in his new character to fulfil his political mission with the Khan of the Kalmucks. So artfully did he prepare the road for his favorable reception at the court of this prince that he was at once and universally welcomed as a benefactor. The pensions of the councillors were so much additional wealth poured into the Tartar exchequer; as to the ties of dependency thus created, experience had not yet enlightened these simple tribes as to that result. 15 And that he himself should be the chief of these mercenary councillors was so far from being charged upon Zebek as any offence or any ground of suspicion that his relative the Khan returned him hearty thanks for his services, under the belief that he could have accepted this appointment only with a view to keep out other and more unwelcome 25 pretenders, who would not have had the same motives of consanguinity or friendship for executing its duties in a spirit of kindness to the Kalmucks. The first use which he made of his new functions about the Khan's person was to attack 30

the Court of Russia, by a romantic villainy not easy to be credited, for those very acts of interference with the council which he himself had prompted. This was a dangerous step; but it was indispensable to his further advance upon the gloomy path which he had traced out for himself. A triple vengeance was what he meditated. First, upon the Russian Cabinet, for having undervalued his own pretensions to the throne; second, upon his
10 amiable rival for having supplanted him; and third, upon all those of the nobility who had manifested their sense of his weakness by their neglect, or their sense of his perfidious character by their suspicions. Here was a colossal outline of wicked-
15 ness; and by one in his situation, feeble (as it might seem) for the accomplishment of its humblest parts, how was the total edifice to be reared in its comprehensive grandeur? He, a worm as he was, could he venture to assail the
20 mighty behemoth of Muscovy, the potentate who counted three hundred languages around the footsteps of his throne, and from whose "lion ramp" recoiled alike "baptized and infidel"—Christendom on the one side, strong by her intellect and
25 her organization, and the "Barbaric East" on the other, with her unnumbered numbers? The match was a monstrous one; but in its very monstrosity there lay this germ of encouragement, that it could

LINE I.—**Romantic villainy.** In what sense is this phrase used?

not be suspected. The very hopelessness of the scheme grounded his hope, and he resolved to execute a vengeance which should involve, as it were, in the unity of a well-laid tragic fable, all whom he judged to be his enemies. That vengeance lay 5 in detaching from the Russian Empire the whole Kalmuck nation, and breaking up that system of intercourse which had thus far been beneficial to both. This last was a consideration which moved him but little. True it was, that Russia to the 10 Kalmucks had secured lands and extensive pasturage; true it was, that the Kalmucks reciprocally to Russia had furnished a powerful cavalry. But the latter loss would be part of his triumph, and the former might be more than compensated in other 15 climates under other sovereigns. Here was a scheme which, in its final accomplishment, would avenge him bitterly on the Czarina, and in the course of its accomplishment might furnish him with ample occasions for removing his other 20 enemies. It may be readily supposed, indeed, that he who could deliberately raise his eyes to the Russian autocrat as an antagonist in single duel with himself was not likely to feel much anxiety about Kalmuck enemies of whatever rank. He 25 took his resolution, therefore, sternly and irrevocably, to effect this astonishing translation of an ancient people across the pathless deserts of Central Asia, intersected continually by rapid rivers, rarely furnished with bridges, and of which the fords 30

were known only to those who might think it for their interest to conceal them, through many nations inhospitable or hostile, frost and snow around them (from the necessity of commencing
5 their flight in winter) famine in their front, and the sabre, or even the artillery of an offended and mighty Empress hanging upon their rear for thousands of miles. But what was to be their final
10 mark—the port of shelter after so fearful a course of wandering? Two things were evident: it must be some power at a great distance from Russia, so as to make return even in that view hopeless; and it must be a power of sufficient rank to insure them
15 protection from any hostile efforts on the part of the Czarina for reclaiming them, or for chastising their revolt. Both conditions were united obviously in the person of Kien Long, the reigning Emperor of China, who was further recommended to them by his respect for the head of their religion.
20 To China, therefore, and, as their first rendezvous, to the shadow of the great Chinese Wall, it was settled by Zebek that they should direct their flight.

Next came the question of time—*when* should the flight commence? And finally, the more delicate question as to the choice of accomplices. To
25 extend the knowledge of the conspiracy too far was to insure its betrayal to the Russian Government. Yet, at some stage of the preparations, it was evident that a very extensive confidence must be
30 made, because in no other way could the mass of

the Kalmuck population be persuaded to furnish their families with the requisite equipments for so long a migration. This critical step, however, it was resolved to defer up to the latest possible moment, and, at all events, to make no general communication on the subject until the time of departure should be definitely settled. In the meantime Zebek admitted only three persons to his confidence, of whom Oubacha, the reigning prince, was almost necessarily one; but him, from his yielding and somewhat feeble character, he viewed rather in the light of a tool than as one of his active accomplices. Those whom (if anybody) he admitted to an unreserved participation in his counsels were two only, the great Lama among the Kalmucks, and his own father-in-law, Erempel, a ruling prince of some tribe in the neighborhood of the Caspian Sea, recommended to his favor not so much by any strength of talent corresponding to the occasion as by his blind devotion to himself and his passionate anxiety to promote the elevation of his daughter and his son-in-law to the throne of a sovereign prince. A titular prince Zebek already was; but this dignity, without the substantial accompaniment of a sceptre, seemed but an empty sound to both of these ambitious rebels. The other accomplice, whose name was Loosan-Dchaltzan, and whose rank was that of Lama, or Kalmuck pontiff, was a person of far more distinguished pretensions; he had something of the same gloomy

and terrific pride which marked the character of Zebek himself, manifesting also the same energy, accompanied by the same unfaltering cruelty, and a natural facility of dissimulation even more profound. It was by this man that the other question was settled, as to the time for giving effect to their designs. His own pontifical character had suggested to him that, in order to strengthen their influence with the vast mob of simple-minded men whom they were to lead into a howling wilderness, after persuading them to lay desolate their own ancient hearths, it was indispensable that they should be able, in cases of extremity, to plead the express sanction of God for their entire enterprise. This could only be done by addressing themselves to the great head of their religion, the Dalai-Lama of Tibet. Him they easily persuaded to countenance their schemes; and an oracle was delivered solemnly at Tibet to the effect that no ultimate prosperity would attend this great Exodus unless it were pursued through the years of the *tiger* and the *hare*. Now, the Kalmuck custom is to distinguish their years by attaching to each a denomination taken from one of twelve animals, the exact order of succession being absolutely fixed, so that the cycle revolves, of course, through a period of a dozen years. Consequently, if the approaching year of the *tiger* were suffered to escape them, in that case the expedition must be delayed for twelve years more; within which period, even were no other

unfavorable changes to arise, it was pretty well foreseen that the Russian Government would take the most effectual means for bridling their vagrant propensities by a ring-fence of forts or military posts; to say nothing of the still readier plan for 5 securing their fidelity (a plan already talked of in all quarters) by exacting a large body of hostages selected from the families of the most influential nobles. On these cogent considerations, it was solemnly determined that this terrific experiment 10 should be made in the next year of the *tiger*, which happened to fall upon the Christian year 1771. With respect to the month, there was, unhappily for the Kalmucks, even less latitude allowed to their choice than with respect to the year. It was 15 absolutely necessary, or it was thought so, that the different divisions of the nation which pastured their flocks on both banks of the Wolga should have the means of effecting an instantaneous junction; because the danger of being intercepted by 20 flying columns of the imperial armies was precisely the greatest at the outset. Now, from the want of bridges, or sufficient river craft for transporting so vast a body of men, the sole means which could be depended upon (especially where so many women, 25 children and camels were concerned) was *ice*: and this, in a state of sufficient firmness, could not be absolutely counted upon before the month of January. Hence it happened that this astonishing Exodus of a whole nation, before so much as a 30

whisper of the design had begun to circulate amongst those whom it most interested, before it was even suspected that any man's wishes pointed in that direction, had been definitely appointed for 5 January of the year 1771. And almost up to the Christmas of 1770 the poor simple Kalmuck herds-men and their families were going nightly to their peaceful beds, without even dreaming that the *fiat* had already gone forth from their rulers which 10 consigned those quiet abodes, together with the peace and comfort which reigned within them, to a withering desolation, now close at hand.

Meantime war raged on a great scale between Russia and the Sultan, and until the time arrived 15 for throwing off their vassalage, it was necessary that Oubacha should contribute his usual contingent of martial aid. Nay, it had unfortunately become prudent that he should contribute much more than his usual aid. Human experience gives 20 ample evidence that in some mysterious and unaccountable way no great design is ever agitated, no matter how few or how faithful may be the participants, but that some presentiment—some dim mis-giving—is kindled amongst those whom it is chiefly 25 important to blind. And, however it might have happened, certain it is that already, when as yet no syllable of the conspiracy had been breathed to any man whose very existence was not staked upon its concealment, nevertheless, some vague and 30 uneasy jealousy had arisen in the Russian Cabinet

as to the future schemes of the Kalmuck Khan; and very probable it is that but for the war then raging, and the consequent prudence of conciliating a very important vassal, or at least of abstaining from what would powerfully alienate him, even at that moment such measures would have been adopted as must forever have intercepted the Kalmuck schemes. Slight as were the jealousies of the Imperial Court, they had not escaped the Machiavelian eyes of Zebek and the Lama. And under their guidance Oubacha, bending to the circumstances of the moment, and meeting the jealousy of the Russian Court with a policy corresponding to their own, strove by unusual zeal to efface the Czarina's unfavorable impressions. He enlarged the scale of his contributions, and *that* so prodigiously that he absolutely carried to headquarters a force of thirty-five thousand cavalry fully equipped: some go further, and rate the amount beyond forty thousand; but the smaller estimate is, at all events, *within* the truth.

With this magnificent array of cavalry, heavy as well as light, the Khan went into the field under great expectations; and these he more than realized. Having the good fortune to be concerned with so ill-organized and disorderly a description of force as that which at all times composed the bulk of a Turkish army, he carried victory along with his banners; gained many partial successes; and at last, in a pitched battle, overthrew the

Turkish force opposed to him with a loss of five thousand men left upon the field.

These splendid achievements seemed likely to operate in various ways against the impending
5 revolt. Oubacha had now a strong motive, in the martial glory acquired, for continuing his connection with the empire in whose service he had won it, and by whom only it could be fully appreciated. He was now a great marshal of a great
10 empire, one of the Paladins around the imperial throne; in China he would be nobody, or (worse than that) a mendicant alien, prostrate at the feet, and soliciting the precarious alms of a prince with whom he had no connection.
15 Besides, it might reasonably be expected that the Czarina, grateful for the really efficient aid given by the Tartar prince, would confer upon him such eminent rewards as might be sufficient to anchor his hopes upon Russia, and to wean him
20 from every possible seduction. These were the obvious suggestions of prudence and good sense to every man who stood neutral in the case. But they were disappointed. The Czarina knew her obligations to the Khan, but she did not acknowl-
25 edge them. Wherefore? That is a mystery, perhaps never to be explained. So it was, however. The Khan went unhonored; no *ukase* ever proclaimed his merits; and perhaps, had he even been abundantly recompensed by Russia, there
30 were others who would have defeated these ten-

dencies to reconciliation. Erempel, Zebek, and Loosang the Lama, were pledged life-deep to prevent any accommodation; and their efforts were unfortunately seconded by those of their deadliest enemies. In the Russian Court there were at that 5 time some great nobles preoccupied with feelings of hatred and blind malice towards the Kalmucks, quite as strong as any which the Kalmucks could harbor towards Russia, and not, perhaps, so well founded. Just as much as the Kalmucks hated 10 the Russian yoke, their galling assumption of authority, the marked air of disdain, as towards a nation of ugly, stupid, and filthy barbarians, which too generally marked the Russian bearing and language, but, above all, the insolent contempt, 15 or even outrages, which the Russian governors or great military commandants tolerated in their followers towards the barbarous religion and superstitious mummeries of the Kalmuck priesthood—precisely in that extent did the fe- 20 rocity of the Russian resentment, and their wrath at seeing the trampled worm turn or attempt a feeble retaliation, react upon the unfortunate Kalmucks. At this crisis, it is probable that envy and wounded pride, upon wit- 25 nessing the splendid victories of Oubacha and Momotbacha over the Turks and Bashkirs, contributed strength to the Russian irritation. And it must have been through the intrigues of those nobles about her person who chiefly smarted 30

under these feelings that the Czarina could ever have lent herself to the unwise and ungrateful policy pursued at this critical period towards the Kalmuck Khan. That Czarina was no longer
5 Elizabeth Petrowna; it was Catherine II.—a princess who did not often err so injuriously (injuriously for herself as much as for others) in the measures of her government. She had soon ample reason for repenting of her false policy. Meantime, how
10 much it must have co-operated with the other motives previously acting upon Oubacha in sustaining his determination to revolt, and how powerfully it must have assisted the efforts of all the Tartar chieftains in preparing the minds of their
15 people to feel the necessity of this difficult enterprise, by arming their pride and their suspicions against the Russian Government, through the keenness of their sympathy with the wrongs of their insulted prince, may be readily imagined. It
20 is a fact, and it has been confessed by candid Russians themselves, when treating of this great dismemberment, that the conduct of the Russian Cabinet throughout the period of suspense and during the crisis of hesitation in the Kalmuck
25 Council was exactly such as was most desirable for the purposes of the conspirators; it was such, in fact, as to set the seal to all their machinations, by supplying distinct evidences and official vouchers for what could otherwise have been, at the most, matters
30 of doubtful suspicion and indirect presumption.

Nevertheless, in the face of all these arguments, and even allowing their weight so far as not at all to deny the injustice or the impolicy of the imperial ministers, it is contended by many persons who have reviewed the affair with a command of all the documents bearing on the case, more especially the letters or minutes of council subsequently discovered in the handwriting of Zebek-Dorchi, and the important evidence of the Russian captive Weseloff, who was carried off by the Kalmucks in their flight, that beyond all doubt Oubacha was powerless for any purpose of impeding or even of delaying the revolt. He himself, indeed, was under religious obligations of the most terrific solemnity never to flinch from the enterprise, or even to slacken in his zeal: for Zebek-Dorchi, distrusting the firmness of his resolution under any unusual pressure of alarm or difficulty, had, in the very earliest stage of the conspiracy, availed himself of the Khan's well-known superstition to engage him, by means of previous concert with the priests and their head the Lama, in some dark and mysterious rites of consecration, terminating in oaths under such terrific sanctions as no Kalmuck would have courage to violate. As far, therefore, as regarded the personal share of the Khan in what was to come, Zebek was entirely at his ease; he knew him to be so deeply pledged by religious terrors to the prosecution of the conspiracy that no honors within the Czarina's gift could have

possibly shaken his adhesion: and then, as to threats from the same quarter, he knew him to be sealed against those fears by others of a gloomier character, and better adapted to his peculiar
5 temperament. For Oubacha was a brave man as respected all bodily enemies or the dangers of human warfare, but was as sensitive and as timid as the most superstitious of old women in facing the frowns of a priest, or under the vague anticipa-
10 tions of ghostly retributions. But, had it been otherwise, and had there been any reason to apprehend an unsteady demeanor on the part of this prince at the approach of the critical moment, such were the changes already effected in the state of
15 their domestic politics amongst the Tartars, by the undermining arts of Zebek-Dorchi and his ally the Lama, that very little importance would have attached to that doubt. All power was now effectually lodged in the hands of Zebek-Dorchi.
20 He was the true and absolute wielder of the Kalmuck sceptre; all measures of importance were submitted to his discretion; and nothing was finally resolved but under his dictation. This result he had brought about, in a year or two, by means
25 sufficiently simple: first of all, by availing himself of the prejudice in his favor, so largely diffused amongst the lowest of the Kalmucks, that his own title to the throne, in quality of great-grandson in a direct line from Ajouka, the most illustrious of
30 all the Kalmuck Khans, stood upon a better basis

than that of Oubacha, who derived from a collateral branch; secondly, with respect to that sole advantage which Oubacha possessed above himself in the ratification of his title, by improving this difference between their situations to the disadvantage of his competitor, as one who had not scrupled to accept that triumph from an alien power at the price of his independence which he himself (as he would have it understood) disdained to court; thirdly, by his own talents and address, coupled with the ferocious energy of his moral character; fourthly—and perhaps in an equal degree—by the criminal facility and good nature of Oubacha; finally (which is remarkable enough, as illustrating the character of the man), by that very new modeling of the Sarga or Privy Council which he had used as a principal topic of abuse and malicious insinuation against the Russian Government, whilst, in reality, he first had suggested the alteration to the Empress, and he chiefly appropriated the political advantages which it was fitted to yield. For, as he was himself appointed the chief of the Sargatchi, and as the pensions to the inferior Sargatchi passed through his hands, whilst in effect they owed their appointments to his nomination, it may be easily supposed that, whatever power existed in the state capable of controlling the Khan being held by the Sarga under its new organization, and this body being completely under his influence, the final result was to throw all the functions of the

state, whether nominally in the prince or in the council, substantially into the hands of this one man; whilst, at the same time, from the strict league which he maintained with the Lama, all the
5 thunders of the spiritual power were always ready to come in aid of the magistrate, or to supply his incapacity in cases which he could not reach.

But the time was now rapidly approaching for the mighty experiment. The day was drawing
10 near on which the signal was to be given for raising the standard of revolt, and by a combined movement on both sides of the Wolga for spreading the smoke of one vast conflagration, that should wrap in a common blaze their own huts and the
15 stately cities of their enemies, over the breadth and length of those great provinces in which their flocks were dispersed. The year of the *tiger* was now within one little month of its commencement; the fifth morning of that year was fixed for the fatal
20 day when the fortunes and happiness of a whole nation were to be put upon the hazard of a dicer's throw; and as yet that nation was in profound ignorance of the whole plan. The Khan, such was the kindness of his nature, could not bring
25 himself to make the revelation so urgently required. It was clear, however, that this could not be delayed; and Zebek-Dorchi took the task willingly upon himself. - But where or how should this notification be made, so as to exclude Russian
30 hearers? After some deliberation, the following

plan was adopted:—Couriers, it was contrived, should arrive in furious haste, one upon the heels of another, reporting a sudden inroad of the Kirghises and Bashkirs upon the Kalmuck lands, at a point distant about 120 miles. Thither all the 5 Kalmuck families, according to immemorial custom, were required to send a separate representative; and there accordingly, within three days, all appeared. The distance, the solitary ground appointed for the rendezvous, the rapidity of the 10 march, all tended to make it almost certain that no Russian could be present. Zebek-Dorchi then came forward. He did not waste many words upon rhetoric. He unfurled an immense sheet of parchment, visible from the uttermost distance at which 15 any of this vast crowd could stand; the total number amounted to 80,000; all saw, and many heard. They were told of the oppressions of Russia; of her pride and haughty disdain evidenced towards them by a thousand acts; of her contempt 20 for their religion; of her determination to reduce them to absolute slavery; of the preliminary measures she had already taken by erecting forts upon many of the great rivers in their neighborhood; of the ulterior intentions she thus announced to 25 circumscribe their pastoral lands, until they would all be obliged to renounce their flocks, and to collect in towns like Sarepta, there to pursue mechanical and servile trades of shoemaker, tailor, and weaver, such as the free-born Tartar had 30

always disdained. "Then, again," said the subtle prince, "she increases her military levies upon our population every year; we pour out our blood as young men in her defence, or more often in support of her insolent aggressions; and, as old men, we reap nothing from our sufferings, nor benefit by our survivorship where so many are sacrificed." At this point of his harangue, Zebek produced several papers (forged, as it is generally believed, by himself and the Lama), containing projects of the Russian Court for a general transfer of the eldest sons, taken *en masse* from the greatest Kalmuck families, to the imperial court. "Now let this be once accomplished," he argued, "and there is an end of all useful resistance from that day forwards. Petitions we might make, or even remonstrances; as men of words we might play a bold part; but for deeds, for that sort of language by which our ancestors were used to speak—holding us by such a chain, Russia would make a jest of our wishes, knowing full well that we should not dare to make any effectual movement."

Having thus sufficiently aroused the angry passions of his vast audience, and having alarmed their fears by this pretended scheme against their first-born (an artifice which was indispensable to his purpose, because it met beforehand *every* form of amendment to his proposal coming from the more moderate nobles, who would not otherwise have failed to insist upon trying the effect of bold

addresses to the Empress before resorting to any desperate extremity), Zebek-Dorchi opened his scheme of revolt, and, if so, of instant revolt; since any preparations reported at St. Petersburg would be a signal for the armies of Russia to cross into 5 such positions from all parts of Asia as would effectually intercept their march. It is remarkable, however, that, with all his audacity and his reliance upon the momentary excitement of the Kalmucks, the subtle prince did not venture, at 10 this stage of his seduction, to make so startling a proposal as that of a flight to China. All that he held out for the present was a rapid march to the Temba or some other great river, which they were to cross, and to take up a strong position on the 15 farther bank, from which, as from a post of conscious security, they could hold a bolder language to the Czarina, and one which would have a better chance of winning a favorable audience.

These things, in the irritated condition of the 20 simple Tartars, passed by acclamation; and all returned homewards to push forward with the most furious speed the preparations for their awful undertaking. Rapid and energetic these of necessity were; and in that degree they became notice- 25 able and manifest to the Russians who happened to be intermingled with the different hordes, either on commercial errands, or as agents officially from the Russian Government, some in a financial, others in a diplomatic character.

Amongst these last (indeed at the head of them) was a Russian of some distinction, by name Kichinskoi, a man memorable for his vanity, and memorable also as one of the many victims to the
5 Tartar revolution. This Kichinskoi had been sent by the Empress as her envoy to overlook the conduct of the Kalmucks; he was styled the Grand Pristaw, or Great Commissioner, and was universally known amongst the Tartar tribes by this title.
10 His mixed character of ambassador and of political *surveillant*, combined with the dependent state of the Kalmucks, gave him a real weight in the Tartar councils, and might have given him a far greater, had not his outrageous self-conceit, and his arro-
15 gant confidence in his own authority as due chiefly to his personal qualities for command, led him into such harsh displays of power, and menaces so odious to the Tartar pride, as very soon made him an object of their profoundest malice. He had
20 publicly insulted the Khan; and upon making a communication to him to the effect that some reports began to circulate, and even to reach the Empress, of a design in agitation to fly from the imperial dominions, he had ventured to say, "But
25 this you dare not attempt; I laugh at such rumors; yes, Khan, I laugh at them to the Empress; for you are a chained bear, and that you know." The Khan turned away on his heel with marked disdain; and the Pristaw, foaming at the
30 mouth, continued to utter, amongst those of the

Khan's attendants who staid behind to catch his real sentiments in a moment of unguarded passion, all that the blindest frenzy of rage could suggest to the most presumptuous of fools. It was now ascertained that suspicions *had* arisen; but at the 5 same time it was ascertained that the Pristaw spoke no more than the truth in representing himself to have discredited these suspicions. The fact was that the mere infatuation of vanity made him believe that nothing could go on undetected by his 10 all-piercing sagacity, and that no rebellion could prosper when rebuked by his commanding presence. The Tartars, therefore, pursued their preparations, confiding in the obstinate blindness of the Grand Pristaw as in their perfect safeguard; and 15 such it proved—to his own ruin as well as that of myriads beside.

Christmas arrived; and, a little before that time, courier upon courier came dropping in, one upon the very heels of another, to St. Petersburg, 20 assuring the Czarina that beyond all doubt the Kalmucks were in the very crisis of departure. These despatches came from the Governor of Astrachan, and copies were instantly forwarded to Kichinskoi. Now, it happened that between this 25 governor—a Russian named Beketoff—and the Pristaw had been an ancient feud. The very name of Beketoff inflamed his resentment; and no sooner did he see that hated name attached to the despatch than he felt himself confirmed in his former 30

views with ten-fold bigotry, and wrote instantly, in terms of the most printed ridicule, against the new alarmist, pledging his own head upon the visionariness of his alarms. Beketoff, however, 5 was not to be put down by a few hard words, or by ridicule: he persisted in his statements; the Russian ministry were confounded by the obstinacy of the disputants; and some were beginning even to treat the Governor of Astrachan as a 10 bore, and as the dupe of his own nervous terrors, when the memorable day arrived, the fatal 5th of January, which for ever terminated the dispute, and put a seal upon the earthly hopes and fortunes of unnumbered myriads. The Governor of Astra- 15 chan was the first to hear the news. Stung by the mixed furies of jealousy, of triumphant vengeance, and of anxious ambition, he sprang into his sledge, and, at the rate of 300 miles a day, pursued his route to St. Petersburg—rushed into 20 the Imperial presence—announced the total realization of his worst predictions; and, upon the confirmation of this intelligence by subsequent despatches from many different posts on the Wolga, he received an imperial commission to seize the 25 person of his deluded enemy, and to keep him in strict captivity. These orders were eagerly fulfilled; and the unfortunate Kichinskoi soon afterwards expired of grief and mortification in the gloomy solitude of a dungeon—a victim to 30 his own immeasurable vanity, and the blinding

self-delusions of a presumption that refused all warning.

The Governor of Astrachan had been but too faithful a prophet. Perhaps even *he* was surprised at the suddenness with which the verification followed his reports. Precisely on the 5th of January, the day so solemnly appointed under religious sanctions by the Lama, the Kalmucks on the east bank of the Wolga were seen at the earliest dawn of day assembling by troops and squadrons, and in the tumultuous movement of some great morning of battle. Tens of thousands continued moving off the ground at every half-hour's interval. Women and children, to the amount of two hundred thousand and upwards, were placed upon wagons, or upon camels, and drew off by masses of twenty thousand at once—placed under suitable escorts, and continually swelled in numbers by other outlying bodies of the horde, who kept falling in at various distances upon the first and second day's march. From sixty to eighty thousand of those who were the best mounted staid behind the rest of the tribes, with purposes of devastation and plunder more violent than prudence justified, or the amiable character of the Khan could be supposed to approve. But in this, as in other instances, he was completely overruled by the malignant counsels of Zebek-Dorchi. The first tempest of the desolating fury of the Tartars discharged itself upon their own habitations. But

this, as cutting off all infirm looking backward from the hardships of their march, had been thought so necessary a measure by all the chieftains that even Oubacha himself was the first to
5 authorise the act by his own example. He seized a torch previously prepared with materials the most durable as well as combustible, and steadily applied it to the timbers of his own palace. Nothing was saved from the general wreck except the
10 portable part of the domestic utensils, and that part of the wood-work which could be applied to the manufacture of the long Tartar lances. This chapter in their memorable day's work being finished, and the whole of their villages throughout a
15 district of ten thousand square miles in one simultaneous blaze, the Tartars waited for further orders.

These, it was intended, should have taken a character of valedictory vengeance, and thus have left behind to the Czarina a dreadful commentary
20 upon the main motives of their flight. It was the purpose of Zebek-Dorchi that all the Russian towns, churches, and buildings of every description, should be given up to pillage and destruction, and such treatment applied to the defenseless inhabitants as
25 might naturally be expected from a fierce people already infuriated by the spectacle of their own outrages, and by the bloody retaliations which they must necessarily have provoked. This part of the tragedy, however, was happily intercepted by a
30 providential disappointment at the very crisis of

departure. It has been mentioned already that the motive for selecting the depth of winter as the season of flight (which otherwise was obviously the very worst possible) had been the impossibility of effecting a junction sufficiently rapid with the tribes 5 on the west of the Wolga, in the absence of bridges, unless by a natural bridge of ice. For this one advantage, the Kalmuck leaders had consented to aggravate by a thousandfold the calamities inevitable to a rapid flight over boundless tracts of 10 country, with women, children, and herds of cattle—for this one single advantage; and yet, after all, it was lost. The reason never has been explained satisfactorily, but the fact was such. Some have said that the signals were not properly concerted 15 for marking the moment of absolute departure—that is, for signifying whether the settled intention of the Eastern Kalmucks might not have been suddenly interrupted by adverse intelligence. Others have supposed that the ice might not be equally 20 strong on both sides of the river, and might even be generally insecure for the treading of heavy and heavily laden animals such as camels. But the prevailing notion is that some accidental movements on the 3d and 4th of January of Russian troops in 25 the neighbourhood of the Western Kalmucks, though really having no reference to them or their plans, had been construed into certain signs that all was discovered; and that the prudence of the Western chieftains, who, from situation, had never been 30

exposed to those intrigues by which Zebek-Dorchi had practised upon the pride of the Eastern tribes, now stepped in to save their people from ruin. Be the cause what it might, it is certain that the

5 Western Kalmucks were in some way prevented from forming the intended junction with their brethren of the opposite bank; and the result was that at least one hundred thousand of these Tartars were left behind in Russia. This accident it was

10 which saved their Russian neighbors universally from the desolation which else awaited them. One general massacre and conflagration would assuredly have surprised them, to the utter extermination of their property, their houses, and themselves, had it

15 not been for this disappointment. But the Eastern chieftains did not dare to put to hazard the safety of their brethren under the first impulse of the Czarina's vengeance for so dreadful a tragedy; for, as they were well aware of too many circumstances

20 by which she might discover the concurrence of the Western people in the general scheme of revolt, they justly feared that she would thence infer their concurrence also in the bloody events which marked its outset.

25 Little did the Western Kalmucks guess what reasons they also had for gratitude on account of an interposition so unexpected, and which at the moment they so generally deplored. Could they have but witnessed the thousandth part of the

30 sufferings which overtook their Eastern brethren

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in the first month of their sad flight, they would have blessed Heaven for their own narrow escape; and yet these sufferings of the first month were but a prelude or foretaste comparatively slight of those which afterwards succeeded.

For now began to unroll the most awful series of calamities, and the most extensive, which is anywhere recorded to have visited the sons and daughters of men. It is possible that the sudden inroads of destroying nations, such as the Huns, 10 or the Avars, or the Mongol Tartars, may have inflicted misery as extensive; but there the misery and the desolation would be sudden, like the flight of volleying lightning. Those who were spared at first would generally be spared to the end; those 15 who perished at all would perish at once. It is possible that the French retreat from Moscow may have made some nearer approach to this calamity in duration, though still a feeble and miniature approach; for the French sufferings did not com- 20 mence in good earnest until about one month from the time of leaving Moscow; and, though it is true that afterwards the vials of wrath were emptied upon the devoted army for six or seven weeks in succession, yet what is that to this Kalmuck 25 tragedy, which lasted for more than as many months? But the main feature of horror by which the Tartar march was distinguished from the French lies in the accompaniment of women and children. They were both, it is true, with the 30

French army, but not so many as to bear any marked proportion to the total numbers concerned. The French, in short, were merely an army—a host of professional destroyers, whose regular trade
5 was bloodshed, and whose regular element was danger and suffering. But the Tartars were a nation carrying along with them more than two hundred and fifty thousand women and children, utterly unequal, for the most part, to any contest
10 with the calamities before them. The Children of Israel were in the same circumstances as to the accompaniment of their families; but they were released from the pursuit of their enemies in a very early stage of their flight; and their subsequent
15 residence in the Desert was not a march, but a continued halt, and under a continued interposition of Heaven for their comfortable support. Earthquakes, again, however comprehensive in their ravages, are shocks of a moment's duration. A
20 much nearer approach made to the wide range and the long duration of the Kalmuck tragedy may have been in a pestilence such as that which visited Athens in the Peloponnesian War, or London in the reign of Charles II. There also the martyrs
25 were counted by myriads, and the period of the desolation was counted by months. But, after all, the total amount of destruction was on a smaller scale; and there was this feature of alleviation to the *conscious* pressure of the calamity—that the
30 misery was withdrawn from public notice into

private chambers and hospitals. The siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian and his son, taken in its entire circumstances, comes nearest of all—for breadth and depth of suffering, for duration, for the exasperation of the suffering from without by 5 internal feuds, and, finally, for that last most appalling expression of the furnace-heat of the anguish in its power to extinguish the natural affections even of maternal love. But, after all, each case had circumstances of romantic misery 10 peculiar to itself—circumstances without precedent, and (wherever human nature is ennobled by Christianity), it may be confidently hoped, never to be repeated.

The first point to be reached, before any hope of 15 repose could be encouraged, was the river Jaik. This was not above 300 miles from the main point of departure on the Wolga; and, if the march thither was to be a forced one, and a severe one, it was alleged, on the other hand, that the suffering 20 would be the more brief and transient; one summary exertion, not to be repeated, and all was achieved. Forced the march was, and severe beyond example: there the forewarning proved correct; but the promised rest proved a mere 25 phantom of the wilderness—a visionary rainbow, which fled before their hope-sick eyes, across these interminable solitudes, for seven months of hardship and calamity, without a pause. These sufferings, by their very nature, and the circumstances 30

under which they arose, were (like the scenery of the steppes) somewhat monotonous in their coloring and external features; what variety, however, there was will be most naturally exhibited by tracing historically the successive stages of the general misery, exactly as it unfolded itself under the double agency of weakness still increasing from within and hostile pressure from without. Viewed in this manner, under the real order of development, it is remarkable that these sufferings of the Tartars, though under the moulding hands of accident, arrange themselves almost with a scenical propriety. They seem combined as with the skill of an artist; the intensity of the misery advancing regularly with the advances of the march, and the stages of the calamity corresponding to the stages of the route; so that, upon raising the curtain which veils the great catastrophe, we behold one vast climax of anguish, towering upwards by regular gradations, as if constructed artificially for picturesque effect—a result which might not have been surprising had it been reasonable to anticipate the same rate of speed, and even an accelerated rate, as prevailing through the later stages of the expedition. But it seemed, on the contrary, most reasonable to calculate upon a continual decrement in the rate of motion according to the increasing distance from the headquarters of the pursuing enemy. This calculation, however, was defeated by the extraordinary

circumstance that the Russian armies did not begin to close in very fiercely upon the Kalmucks until after they had accomplished a distance of full 2000 miles: 1000 miles farther on the assaults became even more tumultuous and murderous: and already the great shadows of the Chinese Wall were dimly descried when the frenzy and *acharnement* of the pursuers, and the bloody desperation of the miserable fugitives, had reached its uttermost extremity. Let us briefly rehearse the main stages of the misery, and trace the ascending steps of the tragedy, according to the great divisions of the route marked out by the central rivers of Asia.

The first stage, we have already said, was from the Wolga to the Jaik; the distance about 300 miles; the time allowed seven days. For the first week, therefore, the rate of marching averaged about 43 English miles a day. The weather was cold, but bracing; and, at a more moderate pace, this part of the journey might have been accomplished without much distress by a people as hardy as the Kalmucks; as it was, the cattle suffered greatly from over-driving; milk began to fail even for the children; the sheep perished by wholesale; and the children themselves were saved only by the innumerable camels.

The Cossacks, who dwelt upon the banks of the Jaik, were the first among the subjects of Russia to come into collision with the Kalmucks. Great

was their surprise at the suddenness of the irruption, and great also their consternation; for, according to their settled custom, by far the greater part of their number was absent during the winter months at the fisheries upon the Caspian. Some who were liable to surprise at the most exposed points fled in crowds to the fortress of Koulagina, which was immediately invested and summoned by Oubacha. He had, however, in his train only a few light pieces of artillery; and the Russian commandant at Koulagina, being aware of the hurried circumstances in which the Khan was placed, and that he stood upon the very edge, as it were, of a renewed flight, felt encouraged by these considerations to a more obstinate resistance than might else have been advisable, with an enemy so little disposed to observe the usages of civilized warfare. The period of his anxiety was not long: on the fifth day of the siege he descried from the walls a succession of Tartar couriers, mounted upon fleet Bactrian camels, crossing the vast plains around the fortress at a furious pace, and riding into the Kalmuck encampment at various points. Great agitation appeared immediately to follow: orders were soon after despatched in all directions: and it became speedily known that upon a distant flank of the Kalmuck movement a bloody and exterminating battle had been fought the day before, in which one entire tribe of the Khan's dependants, numbering not less than

9000 fighting men, had perished to the last man. This was the *ouloss*, or clan, called Feka-Zechorr, between whom and the Cossacks there was a feud of ancient standing. In selecting, therefore, the points of attack, on occasion of the present hasty inroad, the Cossack chiefs were naturally eager so to direct their efforts as to combine with the service of the Empress some gratification to their own party hatreds: more especially as the present was likely to be their final opportunity for revenge, if the Kalmuck evasion should prosper. Having, therefore, concentrated as large a body of Cossack cavalry as circumstances allowed, they attacked the hostile *ouloss* with a precipitation which denied to it all means for communicating with Oubacha; for the necessity of commanding an ample range of pasturage, to meet the necessities of their vast flocks and herds, had separated this *ouloss* from the Khan's head-quarters by an interval of 80 miles; and thus it was, and not from oversight, that it came to be thrown entirely upon its own resources.

LINE II.—**Evasion**—De Quincey was singularly exact in his use of words. He always chose the word which would express the precise shade of meaning which he had in mind, and thus his vocabulary became much larger than that of a less exact writer would be. He delighted in the use of words of classic origin, and sometimes used them in their original rather than in their derived meaning. The common use of the word "evasion," for example, differs essentially from the sense in which he uses it here; yet, so far as its original meaning goes, it is used with entire propriety.

These had proved insufficient: retreat, from the exhausted state of their horses and camels, no less than from the prodigious encumbrances of their live stock, was absolutely out of the question: 5 quarter was disdained on the one side, and would not have been granted on the other: and thus it had happened that the setting sun of that one day (the thirteenth from the first opening of the revolt) threw his parting rays upon the final agonies of an 10 ancient *ouloss*, stretched upon a bloody field, who on that day's dawning had held and styled themselves an independent nation.

Universal consternation was diffused through the wide borders of the Khan's encampment by this 15 disastrous intelligence; not so much on account of the numbers slain, or the total extinction of a powerful ally, as because the position of the Cossack force was likely to put to hazard the future advances of the Kalmucks, or at least to retard and 20 hold them in check until the heavier columns of the Russian army should arrive upon their flanks. The siege of Koulagina was instantly raised; and that signal, so fatal to the happiness of the women and their children, once again resounded through 25 the tents—the signal for flight, and this time for a flight more rapid than ever. About 150 miles ahead of their present position, there arose a tract of hilly country, forming a sort of margin to the vast sea-like expanse of champaign savannahs, 30 steppes, and occasionally of sandy deserts, which

stretched away on each side of this margin both eastwards and westwards. Pretty nearly in the centre of this hilly range lay a narrow defile, through which passed the nearest and the most practicable route to the river Torgai (the farther bank of which river offered the next great station of security for a general halt). It was the more essential to gain this pass before the Cossacks, inasmuch as not only would the delay in forcing the pass give time to the Russian pursuing columns for combining their attacks, and for bringing up their artillery, but also because (even if all enemies in pursuit were thrown out of the question) it was held by those best acquainted with the difficult and obscure geography of these pathless steppes—that the loss of this one narrow strait amongst the hills would have the effect of throwing them (as their only alternative in a case where so wide a sweep of pasturage was required) upon a circuit of at least 500 miles extra; besides that, after all, this circuitous route would carry them to the Torgai at a point ill fitted for the passage of their heavy baggage. The defile in the hills, therefore, it was resolved to gain; and yet, unless they moved upon it with the velocity of light cavalry, there was little chance but it would be found preoccupied by the Cossacks. They also, it is true, had suffered greatly in the bloody action with the defeated *ouloss*; but the excitement of victory, and the intense sympathy with their

unexampled triumph, had again swelled their ranks, and would probably act with the force of a vortex to draw in their simple countrymen from the Caspian. The question, therefore, of preoccupation was reduced to a race. The Cossacks were marching upon an oblique line not above 50 miles longer than that which led to the same point from the Kalmuck head-quarters before Koulagina; and, therefore, without the most furious haste on the part of the Kalmucks, there was not a chance for them, burdened and "trashed" as they were, to anticipate so agile a light cavalry as the Cossacks in seizing this important pass.

Dreadful were the feelings of the poor women on hearing this exposition of the case. For they easily understood that too capital an interest (the *summa rerum*) was now at stake, to allow of any regard to minor interests, or what would be considered such in their present circumstances. The dreadful week already passed—their inauguration in misery—was yet fresh in their remembrance. The scars of suffering were impressed not only upon their memories, but upon their very persons and the persons of their children. And they knew that, where no speed had much chance of meeting the cravings of the chieftains, no test would be accepted, short of absolute exhaustion, that as much had been accomplished as could have been accomplished. Weseloff, the Russian captive, has recorded the silent wretchedness with which the

women and elder boys assisted in drawing the tent-ropes. On the 5th of January all had been animation, and the joyousness of indefinite expectation; now, on the contrary, a brief but bitter experience had taught them to take an amended calculation 5 of what it was that lay before them.

One whole day and far into the succeeding night had the renewed flight continued; the sufferings had been greater than before; for the cold had been more intense; and many perished out of the 10 living creatures through every class, except only the camels—whose powers of endurance seemed equally adapted to cold and to heat. The second morning, however, brought an alleviation to the distress. Snow had begun to fall, and, though not 15 deep at present, it was easily foreseen that it soon would be so; and that, as a halt would in that case become unavoidable, no plan could be better than that of staying where they were; especially as the same cause would check the advance of the 20 Cossacks. Here then was the last interval of comfort which gleamed upon the unhappy nation during their whole migration. For ten days the snow continued to fall with little intermission. At the end of that time, keen, bright, frosty weather 25 succeeded; the drifting had ceased; in three days the smooth expanse became firm enough to support the treading of the camels; and the flight was recommenced. But during the halt much domestic comfort had been enjoyed; and for the last time univer- 30

sal plenty. The cows and oxen had perished in such vast numbers on the previous marches that an order was now issued to turn what remained to account by slaughtering the whole, and salting
5 whatever part should be found to exceed the immediate consumption. This measure led to a scene of general banqueting and even of festivity amongst all who were not incapacitated for joyous emotions by distress of mind, by grief for the
10 unhappy experience of the few last days, and by anxiety for the too gloomy future. Seventy thousand persons of all ages had already perished, exclusively of the many thousand allies who had been cut down by the Cossack sabre. And the
15 losses in reversion were likely to be many more. For rumors began now to arrive from all quarters, by the mounted couriers whom the Khan had despatched to the rear and to each flank as well as in advance, that large masses of the imperial troops
20 were converging from all parts of Central Asia to the fords of the river Torgai, as the most convenient point for intercepting the flying tribes; and it was by this time well known that a powerful division was close in their rear, and was retarded
25 only by the numerous artillery which had been judged necessary to support their operations. New motives were thus daily arising for quickening the motions of the wretched Kalmucks, and for exhausting those who were already but too much
30 exhausted.

It was not until the 2d day of February that the Khan's advanced guard came in sight of Ouchim, the defile among the hills of Mougaldchares, in which they anticipated so bloody an opposition from the Cossacks. A pretty large body of these 5 light cavalry had, in fact, preoccupied the pass by some hours; but the Khan, having two great advantages—namely, a strong body of infantry, who had been conveyed by sections of five on about 200 camels, and some pieces of light artillery which 10 he had not yet been forced to abandon—soon began to make a serious impression upon this unsupported detachment; and they would probably at any rate have retired; but at the very moment when they were making some dispositions in that 15 view Zebek-Dorchi appeared upon the rear with a body of trained riflemen, who had distinguished themselves in the war with Turkey. These men had contrived to crawl unobserved over the cliffs which skirted the ravine, availing themselves of 20 the dry beds of the summer torrents, and other inequalities of the ground, to conceal their movement. Disorder and trepidation ensued instantly in the Cossack files; the Khan, who had been waiting with the *élite* of his heavy cavalry, charged 25 furiously upon them; total overthrow followed to the Cossacks, and a slaughter such as in some measure avenged the recent bloody extermination of their allies, the ancient *ouloss* of Feka-Zechorr. The slight horses of the Cossacks were unable to 30

support the weight of heavy Polish dragoons and a body of trained *cameleers* (that is, cuirassiers mounted on camels); hardy they were, but not strong, nor a match for their antagonists in weight; and their extraordinary efforts through the last few days to gain their present position had greatly diminished their powers for effecting an escape. Very few, in fact, *did* escape; and the bloody day at Ouchim became as memorable amongst the Cossacks as that which, about twenty days before, had signalized the complete annihilation of the Feka-Zechorr.

The road was now open to the river Irgitch, and as yet even far beyond it to the Torgai; but how long this state of things would continue was every day more doubtful. Certain intelligence was now received that a large Russian army, well appointed in every arm, was advancing upon the Torgai under the command of General Traubenberg. This officer was to be joined on his route by ten thousand Bashkirs, and pretty nearly the same amount of Kirghises—both hereditary enemies of the Kalmucks, both exasperated to a point of madness by the bloody trophies which Oubacha and Momotbacha had, in late years, won from such of their compatriots as served under the Sultan. The Czarina's yoke these wild nations bore with submissive patience, but not the hands by which it had been imposed; and, accordingly, catching with eagerness at the present occasion offered to their

vengeance, they sent an assurance to the Czarina of their perfect obedience to her commands, and at the same time a message significantly declaring in what spirit they meant to execute them, viz., “that they would not trouble her Majesty with 5 prisoners.”

Here then arose, as before with the Cossacks, a race for the Kalmucks with the regular armies of Russia, and concurrently with nations as fierce and semi-humanized as themselves, besides that 10 they had been stung into threefold activity by the furies of mortified pride and military abasement, under the eyes of the Turkish Sultan. The forces, and more especially the artillery, of Russia were far too overwhelming to bear the thought of 15 a regular opposition in pitched battles, even with a less dilapidated state of their resources than they could reasonably expect at the period of their arrival on the Torgai. In their speed lay their only hope—in strength of foot, as before, and not 20 in strength of arm. Onward, therefore, the Kalmucks pressed, marking the lines of their wide-extending march over the sad solitudes of the steppes by a never-ending chain of corpses. The old and the young, the sick man on his couch, the 25 mother with her baby—all were dropping fast. Such sights as these, with the many rueful aggravations incident to the helpless condition of infancy—of disease and of female weakness abandoned to the wolves amidst a howling wilderness, continued 30

to track their course through a space of full two thousand miles; for so much, at the least, it was likely to prove, including the circuits to which they were often compelled by rivers or hostile
5 tribes, from the point of starting on the Wolga, until they could reach their destined halting ground on the east bank of the Torgai. For the first seven weeks of this march their sufferings had been embittered by the excessive severity of the
10 cold; and every night—so long as wood was to be had for fires, either from the lading of the camels, or from the desperate sacrifice of their baggage wagons, or (as occasionally happened) from the forests which skirted the banks of the many rivers
15 which crossed their path—no spectacle was more frequent than that of a circle, composed of men, women, and children, gathered by hundreds round a central fire, all dead and stiff at the return of morning light. Myriads were left behind from
20 pure exhaustion, of whom none had a chance, under the combined evils which beset them, of surviving through the next twenty-four hours. Frost, however, and snow at length ceased to persecute; the vast extent of the march at length
25 brought them into more genial latitudes, and the unusual duration of the march was gradually bringing them into more genial seasons of the year. Two thousand miles had at last been traversed; February, March, April, were gone; the balmy
30 month of May had opened; vernal sights and

sounds came from every side to comfort the heart-weary travellers; and at last, in the latter end of May, crossing the Torgai, they took up a position where they hoped to find liberty to repose themselves for many weeks in comfort as well as in security, and to draw such supplies from the fertile neighborhood as might restore their shattered forces to a condition for executing, with less of wreck and ruin, the large remainder of the journey. Yes; it was true that two thousand miles of wandering had been completed, but in a period of nearly five months, and with the terrific sacrifice of at least two hundred and fifty thousand souls, to say nothing of herds and flocks past all reckoning. These had all perished: ox, cow, horse, mule, ass, sheep, or goat, not one survived—only the camels. These arid and adust creatures, looking like the mummies of some antediluvian animals, without the affections or sensibilities of flesh and blood—these only still erected their speaking eyes to the eastern heavens, and had to all appearance come out from this long tempest of trial unscathed and hardly diminished. The Khan, knowing how much he was individually answerable for the misery which had been sustained, must have wept tears even more bitter than those of Xerxes when he threw his eyes over the myriads whom he had assembled: for the tears of Xerxes were unmingled with remorse. Whatever amends were in his power the Khan resolved to make, by sacrifices to the

general good of all personal regards; and, accordingly, even at this point of their advance, he once more deliberately brought under review the whole question of the revolt. The question was formally
5 debated before the Council whether, even at this point, they should untread their steps, and, throwing themselves upon the Czarina's mercy, return to their old allegiance. In that case, Oubacha professed himself willing to become the scapegoat
10 for the general transgression. This, he argued, was no fantastic scheme, but even easy of accomplishment; for the unlimited and sacred power of the Khan, so well known to the Empress, made it absolutely iniquitous to attribute any separate
15 responsibility to the people—upon the Khan rested the guilt, upon the Khan would descend the imperial vengeance. This proposal was applauded for its generosity, but was energetically opposed by Zebek-Dorchi. Were they to lose the whole jour-
20 ney of two thousand miles? Was their misery to perish without fruit? True it was that they had yet reached only the half-way house; but, in that respect, the motives were evenly balanced for retreat or for advance. Either way they would
25 have pretty nearly the same distance to traverse, but with this difference—that, forwards, their route lay through lands comparatively fertile; backwards, through a blasted wilderness, rich only in memorials of their sorrow, and hideous to Kal-
30 muck eyes by the trophies of their calamity.

Besides, though the Empress might accept an excuse for the past, would she the less forbear to suspect for the future? The Czarina's *pardon* they might obtain, but could they ever hope to recover her *confidence*? Doubtless there would now 5 be a standing presumption against them, an immortal ground of jealousy; and a jealous government would be but another name for a harsh one. Finally, whatever motives there ever had been for the revolt surely remained unimpaired by 10 anything that had occurred. In reality, the revolt was, after all, no revolt, but (strictly speaking) a return to their old allegiance; since, not above one hundred and fifty years ago (viz., in the year 1616), their ancestors had revolted from the 15 Emperor of China. They had now tried both governments; and for them China was the land of promise, and Russia the house of bondage.

Spite, however, of all that Zebek could say or do, the yearning of the people was strongly in behalf of 20 the Khan's proposal; the pardon of their prince, they persuaded themselves, would be readily conceded by the Empress; and there is little doubt that they would at this time have thrown themselves gladly upon the imperial mercy; when sud- 25 denly all was defeated by the arrival of two envoys from Traubenberg. This general had reached the fortress of Orsk, after a very painful march, on the 12th of April; thence he set forwards towards Oriembourg; which he 30

reached upon the 1st of June, having been joined on his route at various times during the month of May by the Kirghises and a corps of ten thousand Bashkirs. From Oriembourg he sent
5 forward his official offers to the Khan, which were harsh and peremptory, holding out no specific stipulations as to pardon or impunity, and exacting unconditional submission as the preliminary price of any cessation from military operations. The
10 personal character of Trautenberg, which was anything but energetic, and the condition of his army, disorganised in a great measure by the length and severity of the march, made it probable that, with a little time for negotiation, a more conciliatory
15 tone would have been assumed. But, unhappily for all parties, sinister events occurred in the meantime, such as effectually put an end to every hope of the kind.

The two envoys sent forward by Trautenberg
20 had reported to this officer that a distance of only ten days' march lay between his own head-quarters and those of the Khan. Upon this fact transpiring, the Kirghises, by their prince Nourali, and the Bashkirs, entreated the Russian general to
25 advance without delay. Once having placed his cannon in position, so as to command the Kalmuck camp, the fate of the rebel Khan and his people would be in his own hands: and they would themselves form his advanced guard. Trautenberg,
30 however (*why* has not been certainly explained),

refused to march, grounding his refusal upon the condition of his army, and their absolute need of refreshment. Long and fierce was the altercation; but at length, seeing no chance of prevailing, and dreading above all other events the escape of their 5 detested enemy, the ferocious Bashkirs went off in a body by forced marches. In six days they reached the Torgai, crossed by swimming their horses, and fell upon the Kalmucks, who were dispersed for many a league in search of food or 10 provender for their camels. The first day's action was one vast succession of independent skirmishes, diffused over a field of thirty to forty miles in extent; one party often breaking up into three or four, and again (according to the accidents of 15 ground) three or four blending into one; flight and pursuit, rescue and total overthrow, going on simultaneously, under all varieties of form, in all quarters of the plain. The Bashkirs had found themselves obliged, by the scattered state of the 20 Kalmucks, to split up into innumerable sections; and thus, for some hours, it had been impossible for the most practised eye to collect the general tendency of the day's fortune. Both the Khan and Zebek-Dorchi were at one moment made pris- 25 oners, and more than once in imminent danger of being cut down; but at length Zebek succeeded in rallying a strong column of infantry, which, with the support of the camel-corps on each flank, compelled the Bashkirs to retreat. Clouds, however, 30

of these wild cavalry continued to arrive through the next two days and nights, followed or accompanied by the Kirghises. These being viewed as the advanced parties of Trautenberg's army, the
5 Kalmuck chieftains saw no hope of safety but in flight; and in this way it happened that a retreat, which had so recently been brought to a pause, was resumed at the very moment when the unhappy fugitives were anticipating a deep repose without
10 further molestation the whole summer through.

It seemed as though every variety of wretchedness were predestined to the Kalmucks, and as if their sufferings were incomplete unless they were rounded and matured by all that the most dreadful
15 agencies of summer's heat could superadd to those of frost and winter. To this sequel of their story I shall immediately revert, after first noticing a little romantic episode which occurred at this point between Oubacha and his unprincipled cousin
20 Zebek-Dorchi.

There was at the time of the Kalmuck flight from the Wolga a Russian gentleman of some rank at the court of the Khan, whom, for political reasons, it was thought necessary to carry along with
25 them as a captive. For some weeks his confinement had been very strict, and in one or two instances cruel. But, as the increasing distance was continually diminishing the chances of escape, and perhaps, also, as the misery of the guards
30 gradually withdrew their attention from all minor

interests to their own personal sufferings, the vigilance of the custody grew more and more relaxed; until at length, upon a petition to the Khan, Mr. Weseloff was formally restored to liberty; and it was understood that he might use his liberty in whatever way he chose, even for returning to Russia, if that should be his wish. Accordingly, he was making active preparations for his journey to St. Petersburg, when it occurred to Zebek-Dorchi that, not improbably, in some of the battles which were then anticipated with Traubenberg, it might happen to them to lose some prisoner of rank,—in which case the Russian Weseloff would be a pledge in their hands for negotiating an exchange. Upon this plea, to his own severe affliction, the Russian was detained until the further pleasure of the Khan. The Khan's name, indeed, was used through the whole affair; but, as it seemed, with so little concurrence on his part, that, when Weseloff in a private audience humbly remonstrated upon the injustice done him, and the cruelty of thus sporting with his feelings by setting him at liberty, and, as it were, tempting him into dreams of home and restored happiness only for the purpose of blighting them, the good-natured prince disclaimed all participation in the affair, and went so far in proving his sincerity as even to give him permission to effect his escape; and, as a ready means of commencing it without raising suspicion, the Khan mentioned

to Mr. Weseloff that he had just then received a message from the Hetman of the Bashkirs, soliciting a private interview on the banks of the Torgai at a spot pointed out. That interview was
5 arranged for the coming night; and Mr. Weseloff might go in the Khan's suite, which on either side was not to exceed three persons. Weseloff was a prudent man, acquainted with the world, and he read treachery in the very outline of this scheme,
10 as stated by the Khan—treachery against the Khan's person. He mused a little, and then communicated so much of his suspicions to the Khan as might put him on his guard; but, upon further consideration, he begged leave to decline the honor
15 of accompanying the Khan. The fact was that three Kalmucks, who had strong motives for returning to their countrymen on the west bank of the Wolga, guessing the intentions of Weseloff, had offered to join him in his escape. These men the
20 Khan would probably find himself obliged to countenance in their project; so that it became a point of honor with Weseloff to conceal their intentions, and therefore to accomplish the evasion from the camp (of which the first steps only would be
25 hazardous) without risking the notice of the Khan.

The district in which they were now encamped abounded through many hundred miles with wild horses of a docile and beautiful breed. Each of
30 the four fugitives had caught from seven to ten of

these spirited creatures in the course of the last few days: this raised no suspicion, for the rest of the Kalmucks had been making the same sort of provision against the coming toils of their remaining route to China. These horses were secured by halters, and hidden about dusk in the thickets which lined the margin of the river. To these thickets, about ten at night, the four fugitives repaired; they took a circuitous path, which drew them as little as possible within danger of challenge from any of the outposts or of the patrols which had been established on the quarters where the Bashkirs lay; and in three-quarters of an hour they reached the rendezvous. The moon had now risen, the horses were unfastened, and they were in the act of mounting, when suddenly the deep silence of the woods was disturbed by a violent uproar and the clashing of arms. Weseloff fancied that he heard the voice of the Khan shouting for assistance. He remembered the communication made by that prince in the morning; and, requesting his companions to support him, he rode off in the direction of the sound. A very short distance brought him to an open glade within the wood, where he beheld four men contending with a party of at least nine or ten. Two of the four were dismounted at the very instant of Weseloff's arrival; one of these he recognised almost certainly as the Khan, who was fighting hand to hand, but at great disadvantage, with two of the adverse horse-

men. Seeing that no time was to be lost, Weseloff fired and brought down one of the two. His companions discharged their carbines at the same moment, and then all rushed simultaneously into the little open area. The thundering sound of about thirty horses all rushing at once into a narrow space gave the impression that a whole troop of cavalry was coming down upon the assailants; who accordingly wheeled about and fled with one impulse. Weseloff advanced to the dismounted cavalier, who, as he expected, proved to be the Khan. The man whom Weseloff had shot was lying dead; and both were shocked, though Weseloff at least was not surprised, on stooping down and scrutinizing his features, to recognise a well-known confidential servant of Zebek-Dorchi. Nothing was said by either party; the Khan rode off escorted by Weseloff and his companions, and for some time a dead silence prevailed. The situation of Weseloff was delicate and critical; to leave the Khan at this point was probably to cancel their recent services; for he might be again crossed on his path, and again attacked by the very party from whom he had just been delivered. Yet, on the other hand, to return to the camp was to endanger the chances of accomplishing the escape. The Khan also was apparently revolving all this in his mind, for at length he broke silence, and said, "I comprehend your situation; and under other circumstances I might feel it my duty to detain your

companions. But it would ill become me to do so after the important service you have just rendered me. Let us turn a little to the left. There, where you see the watch-fire, is an outpost. Attend me so far. I am then safe. You may ⁵ turn and pursue your enterprise; for the circumstances under which you will appear, as my escort, are sufficient to shield you from all suspicion for the present. I regret having no better means at my disposal for testifying my gratitude. But tell ¹⁰ me before we part—Was it accident only which led you to my rescue? Or had you acquired any knowledge of the plot by which I was decoyed into this snare?" Weseloff answered very candidly that mere accident had brought him to the spot at ¹⁵ which he heard the uproar, but that, *having* heard it, and connecting it with the Khan's communication of the morning, he had then designedly gone after the sound in a way which he certainly should not have done at so critical a moment, unless in ²⁰ the expectation of finding the Khan assaulted by assassins. A few minutes after they reached the outpost at which it became safe to leave the Tartar chieftain; and immediately the four fugitives commenced a flight which is perhaps without a paral- ²⁵ lel in the annals of travelling. Each of them led six or seven horses besides the one he rode; and, by shifting from one to the other (like the ancient Desultors of the Roman circus), so as never to burden the same horse for more than half an hour at ³⁰

a time, they continued to advance at the rate of 200 miles in the 24 hours for three days consecutively. After that time, conceiving themselves beyond pursuit, they proceeded less rapidly; though still with a velocity which staggered the belief of Weseloff's friends in after years. He was, however, a man of high principle, and always adhered firmly to the details of his printed report. One of the circumstances there stated is that they continued to pursue the route by which the Kal-mucks had fled, never for an instant finding any difficulty in tracing it by the skeletons and other memorials of their calamities. In particular, he mentions vast heaps of money as part of the valuable property which it had been found necessary to sacrifice. These heaps were found lying still untouched in the deserts. From these Weseloff and his companions took as much as they could conveniently carry; and this it was, with the price of their beautiful horses, which they afterwards sold at one of the Russian military settlements for about £15 apiece, which eventually enabled them to pursue their journey in Russia. This journey, as regarded Weseloff in particular, was closed by a tragical catastrophe. He was at that time young, and the only child of a doting mother. Her affliction under the violent abduction of her son had been excessive, and probably had undermined her constitution. Still she had supported it. Weseloff, giving way to the natural impulses of his

filial affection, had imprudently posted through Russia to his mother's house without warning of his approach. He rushed precipitately into her presence; and she, who had stood the shocks of sorrow, was found unequal to the shock of joy too sudden and too acute. She died upon the spot.

I now revert to the final scenes of the Kalmuck flight. These it would be useless to pursue circumstantially through the whole two thousand miles of suffering which remained; for the character of that suffering was even more monotonous than on the former half of the flight, and also more severe. Its main elements were excessive heat, with the accompaniments of famine and thirst, but aggravated at every step by the murderous attacks of their cruel enemies the Bashkirs and the Kirghises.

These people, "more fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea," stuck to the unhappy Kalmucks like a swarm of enraged hornets. And very often, whilst *they* were attacking them in the rear, their advanced parties and flanks were attacked with almost equal fury by the people of the country which they were traversing; and with good reason, since the law of self-preservation had now obliged the fugitive Tartars to plunder provisions, and to forage wherever they passed. In this respect their condition was a constant oscillation of wretchedness; for sometimes, pressed by grinding famine,

they took a circuit of perhaps a hundred miles, in order to strike into a land rich in the comforts of life; but in such a land they were sure to find a crowded population, of which every arm was
5 raised in unrelenting hostility, with all the advantages of local knowledge, and with constant preoccupation of all the defensible positions, mountain passes, or bridges. Sometimes, again, wearied out with this mode of suffering, they took
10 a circuit of perhaps a hundred miles, in order to strike into a land with few or no inhabitants. But in such a land they were sure to meet absolute starvation. Then, again, whether with or without this plague of starvation, whether with or without
15 this plague of hostility in front, whatever might be the "fierce varieties" of their misery in this respect, no rest ever came to their unhappy rear; it was a torment like the undying worm of conscience. And, upon the whole, it presented a spectacle altogether
20 unprecedented in the history of mankind. Private and personal malignity is not unfrequently immortal; but rare indeed is it to find the same pertinacity of malice in a nation. And what embittered the interest was that the malice was
25 reciprocal. Thus far the parties met upon equal terms; but that equality only sharpened the sense of their dire inequality as to other circumstances. The Bashkirs were ready to fight "from morn to dewy eve." The Kalmucks, on the contrary, were
30 always obliged to run. Was it *from* their enemies

as creatures whom they feared? No; but *towards* their friends—towards that final haven of China—as what was hourly implored by the prayers of their wives, and the tears of their children. But, though they fled unwillingly, too often they fled in 5 vain—being unwillingly recalled. There lay the torment. Every day the Bashkirs fell upon them; every day the same unprofitable battle was renewed; as a matter of course, the Kalmucks recalled part of their advanced guard to fight 10 them; every day the battle raged for hours, and uniformly with the same result. For no sooner did the Bashkirs find themselves too heavily pressed and that the Kalmuck march had been retarded by some hours, than they retired into the bound- 15 less deserts, where all pursuit was hopeless. But, if the Kalmucks resolved to press forward, regardless of their enemies, in that case their attack, became so fierce and overwhelming that the general safety seemed likely to be brought into ques- 20 tion; nor could any effectual remedy be applied to the case, even for each separate day, except by a most embarrassing halt, and by countermarches, that, to men in their circumstances, were almost worse than death. It will not be surprising that 25 the irritation of such a systematic persecutions superadded to a previous and hereditary hatred, and accompanied by the stinging consciousness of utter impotence as regarded all effectual vengeance, should gradually have inflamed the Kalmuck ani- 30

mosity into the wildest expression of downright madness and frenzy. Indeed, long before the frontiers of China were approached, the hostility of both sides had assumed the appearance much
5 more of a warfare amongst wild beasts than amongst creatures acknowledging the restraints of reason or the claims of a common nature. The spectacle became too atrocious; it was that of a host of lunatics pursued by a host of fiends.

*On a fine morning in early autumn of the year 1771, Kien Lung, the Emperor of China, was pursuing his amusements in a wild frontier district lying on the outside of the Great Wall. For
5 many hundred square leagues the country was desolate of inhabitants, but rich in woods of ancient growth, and overrun with game of every description. In a central spot of this solitary region the

*It is probable that much of the thrilling narrative, which follows, is without historic foundation. Kien Lung expressly states, in the memoir of this event, which he caused to be prepared, that he did not meet the flying Kalmucks in person, but deputized certain of his nobles to take his place. The editor has also been unable to find any authority for the closing catastrophe, which is so magnificently portrayed. It may, therefore, be justly inferred that De Quincey gave free rein to his imagination, especially in this final scene. We may, however, well condone a lack of historic accuracy in a passage of such brilliancy and power as that which closes this remarkable essay.

Emperor had built a gorgeous hunting lodge, to which he resorted annually for recreation and relief from the cares of government. Led onwards in pursuit of game, he had rambled to a distance of 200 hundred miles or more from this lodge, 5 followed at a little distance by a sufficient military escort, and every night pitching his tent in a different situation, until at length he had arrived on the very margin of the vast central deserts of Asia. Here he was standing by accident at an 10 opening of his pavilion, enjoying the morning sunshine, when suddenly to the westwards there arose a vast cloudy vapor, which by degrees expanded, mounted, and seemed to be slowly diffusing itself over the whole face of the heavens. By and by 15 this vast sheet of mist began to thicken towards the horizon, and to roll forward in billowy volumes. The Emperor's suite assembled from all quarters. The silver trumpets were sounded in the rear, and from all the glades and forest avenues began to trot 20 forward towards the pavilion the yagers—half cavalry, half huntsmen—who composed the imperial escort. Conjecture was on the stretch to divine the cause of this phenomenon, and the interest continually increased, in proportion as 25 simple curiosity gradually deepened into the anxiety of uncertain danger. At first it had been imagined that some vast troops of deer, or other wild animals of the chase, had been disturbed in their forest haunts by the Emperor's movements, or 30

possibly by wild beasts prowling for prey, and might be fetching a compass by way of re-entering the forest grounds at some remoter points secure from molestation. But this conjecture was dissipated by the slow increase of the cloud, and the steadiness of its motion. In the course of two hours the vast phenomenon had advanced to a point which was judged to be within five miles of the spectators, though all calculations of distance were difficult, and often fallacious, when applied to the endless expanses of the Tartar deserts. Through the next hour, during which the gentle morning breeze had a little freshened, the dusty vapor had developed itself far and wide into the appearance of huge aerial draperies, hanging in mighty volumes from the sky to the earth; and at particular points, where the eddies of the breeze acted upon the pendulous skirts of these aerial curtains, rents were perceived, sometimes taking the form of regular arches, portals, and windows, through which began dimly to gleam the heads of camels "indorsed" with human beings—and at intervals the moving of men and horses in tumultuous array—and then through other openings or vistas at far distant points the flashing of polished arms. But sometimes, as the wind slackened or died away, all those openings, of whatever form, in the cloudy pall would slowly close, and for a time the whole pageant was shut up from view; although the growing din, the clamors, shrieks, and groans,

ascending from infuriated myriads, reported, in a language not to be misunderstood, what was going on behind the cloudy screen.

It was in fact the Kalmuck host, now in the last extremities of their exhaustion, and very fast 5 approaching to that final stage of privation and killing misery, beyond which few or none could have lived, but also, happily for themselves, fast approaching (in a literal sense) that final stage of 10 their long pilgrimage at which they would meet hospitality on a scale of royal magnificence, and full protection from their enemies. These enemies, however, as yet, were still hanging on their rear as fiercely as ever, though this day was destined to be the last of their hideous persecution. The 15 Khan had, in fact, sent forward couriers with all the requisite statements and petitions, addressed to the Emperor of China. These had been duly received, and preparations made in consequence to welcome the Kalmucks with the most paternal 20 benevolence. But, as these couriers had been despatched from the Torgai at the moment of arrival thither, and before the advance of Traubenberg had made it necessary for the Khan to order a hasty renewal of the flight, the Emperor had not 25 looked for their arrival on his frontiers until full three months after the present time. The Khan had indeed expressly notified his intention to pass the summer heats on the banks of the Torgai, and to recommence his retreat about the beginning of 30

- September. The subsequent change of plan, being unknown to Kien Long, left him for some time in doubt as to the true interpretation to be put upon this mighty apparition in the desert; but at length
- 5 the savage clamors of hostile fury, and the clangor of weapons, unveiled to the Emperor the true nature of those unexpected calamities which had so prematurely precipitated the Kalmuck measures.
- 10 Apprehending the real state of affairs, the Emperor instantly perceived that the first act of his fatherly care for these erring children (as he esteemed them), now returning to their ancient obedience, must be—to deliver them from their
- 15 pursuers. And this was less difficult than might have been supposed. Not many miles in the rear was a body of well-appointed cavalry, with a strong detachment of artillery, who always attended the Emperor's motions. These were hastily summoned.
- 20 Meantime it occurred to the train of courtiers that some danger might arise to the Emperor's person from the proximity of a lawless enemy; and accordingly he was induced to retire a little to the rear. It soon appeared, however, to those who
- 25 watched the vapory shroud in the desert, that its motion was not such as would argue the direction of the march to be exactly upon the pavilion, but rather in a diagonal line, making an angle of full 45 degrees with that line in which the imperial

cortége had been standing, and therefore with a distance continually increasing. Those who knew the country judged that the Kalmucks were making for a large fresh-water lake about seven or eight miles distant. They were right; and to that point 5 the imperial cavalry was ordered up; and it was precisely in that spot, and about three hours after, and at noonday on the 8th of September, that the great Exodus of the Kalmuck Tartars was brought to a final close, and with a scene of such memor- 10 able and hellish fury as formed an appropriate winding up to an expedition in all its parts and details so awfully disastrous. The Emperor was not personally present, or at least he saw whatever he *did* see from too great a distance to discriminate 15 its individual features; but he records in his written memorial the report made to him of this scene by some of his own officers.

The lake of Tengis, near the dreadful desert of Kobi, lay in a hollow amongst hills of a moderate 20 height, ranging generally from two to three thousand feet high. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the Chinese cavalry reached the summit of a road which led through a cradle-like dip in the mountains right down upon the margin of the 25 lake. From this pass, elevated about two thousand feet above the level of the water, they continued to descend, by a very winding and difficult road, for an hour and a half; and during the whole of

this descent they were compelled to be inactive spectators of the fiendish spectacle below. The Kalmucks, reduced by this time from about six hundred thousand souls to two hundred and sixty
5 thousand, and after enduring for so long a time the miseries I have previously described—outrageous heat, famine, and the destroying scimitar of the Kirghises and the Bashkirs—had for the last ten days been traversing a hideous desert, where
10 no vestiges were seen of vegetation, and no drop of water could be found. Camels and men were already so overladen that it was a mere impossibility that they should carry a tolerable sufficiency for the passage of this frightful wilderness. On
15 the eighth day, the wretched daily allowance, which had been continually diminishing, failed entirely; and thus, for two days of insupportable fatigue, the horrors of thirst had been carried to the fiercest extremity. Upon this last morning, at
20 the sight of the hills and the forest scenery, which announced to those who acted as guides the neighborhood of the lake of Tengis, all the people rushed along with maddening eagerness to the anticipated solace. The day grew hotter and
25 hotter, the people more and more exhausted, and gradually, in the general rush forwards to the lake, all discipline and command were lost—all attempts to preserve a rearguard were neglected—the wild Bashkirs rode in amongst the encumbered people,

and slaughtered them by wholesale, and almost without resistance. Screams and tumultuous shouts proclaimed the progress of the massacre; but none heeded—none halted; all alike, pauper or noble, continued to rush on with maniacal haste to the waters—all with faces blackened by the heat preying upon the liver, and with tongue drooping from the mouth. The cruel Bashkir was affected by the same misery, and manifested the same symptoms of his misery as the wretched Kalmuck; the murderer was oftentimes in the same frantic misery as his murdered victim—many indeed (an ordinary effect of thirst) in both nations had become lunatic, and in this state, whilst mere multitude and condensation of bodies alone opposed any check to the destroying scimitar and the trampling hoof, the lake was reached; and into that the whole vast body of enemies together rushed, and together continued to rush, forgetful of all things at that moment but of one almighty instinct. This absorption of the thoughts in one maddening appetite lasted for a single half-hour; but in the next arose the final scene of parting vengeance. Far and wide the waters of the solitary lake were instantly dyed red with blood and gore: here rode a party of savage Bashkirs, hewing off heads as fast as the swathes fall before the mower's scythe; there stood unarmed Kalmucks in a death-grapple with their detested foes, both up to the

middle in water, and oftentimes both sinking together below the surface, from weakness or from struggles, and perishing in each other's arms. Did the Bashkirs at any point collect into a cluster for the sake of giving impetus to the assault? Thither were the camels driven in fiercely by those who rode them, generally women or boys; and even these quiet creatures were forced into a share in this carnival of murder, by trampling down as many as they could strike prostrate with the lash of their fore-legs. Every moment the water grew more polluted; and yet every moment fresh myriads came up to the lake and rushed in, not able to resist their frantic thirst, and swallowing large draughts of water, visibly contaminated with the blood of their slaughtered compatriots. Wheresoever the lake was shallow enough to allow of men raising their heads above the water, there, for scores of acres, were to be seen all forms of ghastly fear, of agonizing struggle, of spasm, of death, and the fear of death—revenge, and the lunacy of revenge—until the neutral spectators, of whom there were not a few, now descending the eastern side of the lake, at length averted their eyes in horror. This horror, which seemed incapable of further addition, was, however, increased by an unexpected incident. The Bashkirs, beginning to perceive here and there the approach of the Chinese cavalry, felt it prudent—wheresoever they

were sufficiently at leisure from the passions of the murderous scene—to gather into bodies. This was noticed by the governor of a small Chinese fort, built upon an eminence above the lake; and immediately he threw in a broadside, which spread 5 havoc amongst the Bashkir tribe. As often as the Bashkirs collected into *globes* and *turms*, as their only means of meeting the long lines of descending Chinese cavalry—so often did the Chinese governor of the fort pour in his extermina- 10 ting broadside; until at length the lake, at its lower end, became one vast seething caldron of human bloodshed and carnage. The Chinese cavalry had reached the foot of the hills: the Bashkirs, attentive to *their* movements, had 15 formed; skirmishes had been fought: and, with a quick sense that the contest was henceforwards rapidly becoming hopeless, the Bashkirs and Kirghises began to retire. The pursuit was not as vigorous as the Kalmuck hatred would have 20 desired. But, at the same time, the very gloomiest hatred could not but find, in their own dreadful experience of the Asiatic deserts, and in the certainty that these wretched Bashkirs had to repeat that same experience a second time, for thousands 25 of miles, as the price exacted by a retributory Providence for their vindictive cruelty—not the very gloomiest of the Kalmucks, or the least reflecting, but found in all this a retaliatory chas-

tisement more complete and absolute than any which their swords and lances could have obtained, or human vengeance have devised.

Here ends the tale of the Kalmuck wanderings
5 in the Desert; for any subsequent marches which awaited them were neither long nor painful. Every possible alleviation and refreshment for their exhausted bodies had been already provided by Kien Long with the most princely munificence;
10 and lands of great fertility were immediately assigned to them in ample extent along the river Ily, not very far from the point at which they had first emerged from the wilderness of Kobi. But the beneficent attention of the Chinese Emperor
15 may be best stated in his own words, as translated into French by one of the Jesuit missionaries:—
“La nation des Torgotes (*savoir les Kalmuques*) arriva à Ily, toute delabrée, n'ayant ni de quoi vivre, ni de quoi se vêtir. Je l'avais prévu; et
20 j'avais ordonné de faire en tout genre les provisions nécessaires pour pouvoir les secourir promptement: c'est ce qui a été exécuté. On a fait la division des terres; et on a assigné à chaque famille une portion suffisante pour pouvoir servir à son entretien, soit
25 en la cultivant, soit en y nourrissant des bestiaux. On a donné à chaque particulier des étoffes pour l'habiller, des grains pour se nourrir pendant l'espace d'une année, des ustensiles pour le mén-

age, et d'autres choses nécessaires: et outre cela plusieurs onces d'argent, pour se pourvoir de ce qu'on aurait pu oublier. On a designé des lieux particuliers, fertiles en pâturages; et on leur a donné des bœufs, moutons, etc., pour qu'ils pussent 5 dans la suite travailler par eux-mêmes à leur entretien et à leur bien-être."*

These are the words of the Emperor himself speaking in his own person of his own parental cares; but another Chinese, treating the same sub- 10 ject, records the munificence of this prince in terms which proclaim still more forcibly the disinterested generosity which prompted, and the delicate considerateness which conducted, this extensive bounty. He has been speaking of the Kalmucks, and he 15

*The nation of Torgotes (known as Kalmucks) arrived at Ily, wholly destitute, having neither provisions nor clothes. I had foreseen this, and had given orders that all necessary preparations be made for their prompt relief; which was done. A distribution of lands was made, and a sufficient portion was assigned to each family to serve for its support, either for cultivation or for pasturage of cattle. There were given to each person materials for clothing, grain for food for the period of one year, utensils for household use, and other necessary things; and, besides this, several ounces of silver to provide any articles which might have been overlooked. Special places were set apart for them, rich in pasturage; and there were given to them cattle, sheep, etc., in order that in the future they might be able to work for their own support and well-being.

goes on thus:—"Lorsqu'ils arrivèrent sur nos frontières (au nombre de plusieurs centaines de mille, quoique la fatigue extrême, la faim, la soif, et toutes les autres incommodités inséparables d'une très-
5 longue et très pénible route, en eussent fait périr presque autant), ils étaient réduits à la dernière misère; ils manquaient de tout. Il," [viz. l'Empereur, Kien Long] "leur fit préparer des logemens conformes à leur manière de vivre; il leur
10 fit distribuer des alimens et des habits; il leur fit donner des bœufs, des moutons, et des ustensiles, pour les mettre en état de former des troupeaux et de cultiver la terre, et tout cela à ses propres frais, qui se sont montés à des sommes immenses, sans
15 compter l'argent qu'il a donné à chaque chef-de-famille, pour pourvoir à la subsistance de sa femme et de ses enfans."*

*When they arrived upon our frontiers (to the number of several hundred thousand, although extreme fatigue, hunger, thirst, and all the other deprivations which are inseparable from a very long and laborious journey, had caused almost as many besides to perish), they were reduced to the most extreme misery, and were lacking everything. He (that is, the Emperor, Kien Lung) caused lodgings to be provided for them, suitable to their manner of living. He caused to be given to them cattle, sheep, and implements, to enable them to raise herds and cultivate the soil, and all this, which amounted to vast sums, at his own expense, without counting the money which he gave to each head of a family to provide for the maintenance of his wife and children.

Thus, after their memorable year of misery, the Kalmucks were replaced in territorial possessions, and in comfort equal perhaps, or even superior, to that which they had enjoyed in Russia, and with superior political advantages. But, if equal or 5 superior, their condition was no longer the same; if not in degree, their social prosperity had altered in quality; for, instead of being a purely pastoral and vagrant people, they were now in circumstances which obliged them to become essentially 10 dependent upon agriculture; and thus far raised in social rank, that, by the natural course of their habits and the necessities of life, they were effectually reclaimed from roving and from the savage customs connected with a half nomadic life. 15 They gained also in political privileges, chiefly through the immunity from military service which their new relations enabled them to obtain. These were circumstances of advantage and gain. But one great disadvantage there was, amply to over- 20 balance all other possible gain: the chances were lost or were removed to an incalculable distance for their conversion to Christianity, without which, in these times, there is no absolute advance possible on the path of true civilization. 25

One word remains to be said upon the *personal* interests concerned in this great drama. The catastrophe in this respect was remarkable and complete. Oubacha, with all his goodness and

incapacity of suspecting, had, since the mysterious affair on the banks of the Torgai, felt his mind alienated from his cousin; he revolted from the man that would have murdered him; and he had
5 displayed his caution so visibly as to provoke a reaction in the bearing of Zebek-Dorchi, and a displeasure which all his dissimulation could not hide. This had produced a feud, which, by keeping them aloof, had probably saved the life of Oubacha; for
10 the friendship of Zebek-Dorchi was more fatal than his open enmity. After the settlement on the Ily this feud continued to advance, until it came under the notice of the Emperor, on occasion of a visit which all the Tartar chieftains made to his Majesty
15 at his hunting lodge in 1772. The Emperor informed himself accurately of all the particulars connected with the transaction—of all the rights and claims put forward—and of the way in which they would severally affect the interests of the Kal-
20 muck people. The consequence was that he adopted the cause of Oubacha, and repressed the pretensions of Zebek-Dorchi, who, on his part, so deeply resented this discountenance to his ambitious projects that, in conjunction with other chiefs, he
25 had the presumption even to weave nets of treason against the Emperor himself. Plots were laid, were detected, were baffled; counter-plots were constructed upon the same basis, and with the benefit of the opportunities thus offered. Finally, Zebek-

Dorchi was invited to the imperial lodge, together with all his accomplices; and, under the skillful management of the Chinese nobles in the Emperor's establishment, the murderous artifices of these Tartar chieftains were made to recoil upon themselves, 5 and the whole of them perished by assassination at a great imperial banquet. For the Chinese morality is exactly of that kind which approves in everything the *lex talionis*:—

“Lex nec justior ulla est (as *they* think) 10
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.”*

So perished Zebek-Dorchi, the author and originator of the great Tartar Exodus. Oribacha, meantime, and his people, were gradually recovering from the effects of their misery, and repairing their 15 losses. Peace and prosperity, under the gentle rule of a fatherly lord paramount, redawned upon the tribes: their household *lares*, after so harsh a translation to distant climes, found again a happy reinstatement in what had in fact been their 20 primitive abodes: they found themselves settled in quiet sylvan scenes, rich in all the luxuries of life, and endowed with the perfect loveliness of Arcadian beauty. But from the hills of this favored land, and even from the level grounds as they approached 25 its western border, they still look out upon that fearful wilderness which once beheld a nation in

*[“Nor is any law more just (as they think) than that they who draw the sword by the sword shall perish.”]

agony—the utter extirpation of nearly half a million from amongst its numbers; and, for the remainder, a storm of misery so fierce that in the end (as happened also at Athens during the Peloponnesian War from a different form of misery) very many lost their memory; all records of their past life were wiped out as with a sponge—utterly erased and cancelled: and many others lost their reason; some in a gentle form of pensive melancholy, some in a more restless form of feverish delirium and nervous agitation, and others in the fixed forms of tempestuous mania, raving frenzy, or moping idiocy. Two great commemorative monuments arose in after years to mark the depth and permanence of the awe—the sacred and reverential grief with which all persons looked back upon the dread calamities attached to the year of the *tiger*—all who had either personally shared in those calamities, and had themselves drunk from that cup of sorrow, or who had effectually been made witnesses to their results and associated with their relief: two great monuments; one embodied in the religious solemnity, enjoined by the Dalai Lama, called in the Tartar language a *Romanang*—that is, a national commemoration, with music the most rich and solemn, of all the souls who departed to the rest of Paradise from the afflictions of the Desert (this took place about six years after the arrival in China); secondly, another, more durable

and more commensurate to the scale of the calamity and to the grandeur of this national Exodus, in the mighty columns of granite and brass erected by the Emperor Kien Long near the banks of the Ily. These columns stand upon the very margin of the *steppes*; and they bear a short but emphatic inscription to the following effect:

By the Will of God,
 Here, upon the Brink of these Deserts,
 Which from this Point begin and stretch away 10
 Pathless, treeless, waterless,
 For thousands of miles, and along the margins of many
 mighty Nations,
 Rested from their labors and from great afflictions,
 Under the shadow of the Chinese Wall, 15
 And by the favor of KIEN LONG, God's Lieutenant upon
 Earth,
 The ancient Children of the Wilderness—the Torgote
 Tartars—
 Flying before the wrath of the Grecian Czar, 20
 Wandering Sheep who had strayed away from the Celestial
 Empire in the year 1616,
 But are now mercifully gathered again, after infinite
 sorrow,
 Into the fold of their forgiving Shepherd. 25
 Hallowed be the spot for ever,
 and
 Hallowed be the day—September 8, 1771!
 Amen.

GLOSSARY.

Acharnement (p. 74, l. 8).—Ferocity. Is this word in good taste here?

Adust (p. 86, l. 17).—From the Latin *adustus*, which means *burnt* or *scorched*; hence brown, as if sunburnt.

Anabasis and **Katabasis** (p. 37, l. 7).—Literally mean the ascent and the descent, but are here used in the sense of the invasion and the retreat. The reference is to Napoleon's ill-fated expedition against Russia in 1812.

Astrachan (p. 65, l. 9).—Is a province in southeastern Russia, on the lower course of the Volga, bordering upon the territory of the Kalmucks.

Avars (p. 70, l. 11).—"The true Avars are represented to have been a powerful Turanian people, who exercised a wide dominion in Central Asia during the sixth century. Among the tribes subject to them was one called the Ogors, which is supposed to have belonged to the national family of the Huns. Some time in the early half of the sixth century, the Turks, who then dwelt in the very centre of Asia at the foot of the Altai Mountains, made their first appearance as conquerors, and crushed and almost annihilated the Avars, by means of which victory they became the lords of the Ogors. But this vigorous tribe found an opportunity to escape from the Turkish yoke. Gathering together their wives and children and all their possessions, they turned their faces towards the setting sun. The terror which inspired their flight rendered them resistless in the onset; for the avenging Turk was behind them. They overturned everything before them, and finally established themselves in the wide

plains which stretch from the Don to the Volga. In that age of imperfect information, they were naturally enough confounded with the greatest and most formidable tribe of Turanian stock known to the nations of the west. The report that the Avars had broken loose from Asia, and were coming in irresistible force to overrun Europe, carried terror to all parts of Europe. With true barbaric cunning, the Ogors availed themselves of the mistake, and by calling themselves Avars largely increased the terrors of their name and the chances of conquest. Their ravages gradually extended over central Europe, and they continued to be feared until they were finally overcome by Charlemagne."—J. G. Sheppard's *Fall of Rome*.

Bashkirs—See page 30, No. 5.

"Barbaric East" (p. 45, l. 25).—Probably this phrase comes from Milton,—

"Or where the gorgeous East, with richest hand,
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold."

—*Paradise Lost*, II, 3-4.

Behemoth (p. 45, l. 20).—Is a word of Egyptian origin, and may have been originally applied to the hippopotamus. It is now used as a typical name for a large animal. Cf. Job, XI; 15.

Cambyzes (p. 36, l. 30).—Was a Persian king, who made an expedition into Egypt, 525 B. C.

Cyrus (p. 37, l. 1).—The younger Cyrus was the second son of Darius II. of Persia. He planned to dispossess Artaxerxes, his brother, of the throne, and in 401 B. C. made the celebrated expedition from Sardis, known as the *Anabasis*, but was met by the royal forces commanded by Artaxerxes at Cunaxa, where he was defeated and slain. This expedition and the retreat of the Greek mercenaries, who accompanied him, have been immor-

talized by Xenophon in his great work entitled *The Anabasis*.

Catherine II. (p. 55, l. 5).—Was empress of Russia from 1762 to 1796. It is supposed that she was an accomplice in the murder of her husband, Peter III., whom she succeeded in the royal power. She was a woman of great ability, but of dissolute character.

Champaign Savannahs (p. 77, l. 29).—The former word is derived from the French and the latter from the Spanish. *Champaign* is here used as an adjective, meaning *flat*. The reference is to level, treeless plains, covered with grass or shrubs and bushes.

Concert (p. 56, l. 21).—Here means an agreement.

Cossacks—See Page 30, No. 4.

Czar, or Tsar (p. 39, l. 11).—Is the name of the Emperor of Russia. It is derived from the Latin Caesar.

Dalai-Lama of Tibet (p. 49, l. 16).—In the latter part of the fourteenth century a schism arose in the Tibetan Church, and each of the resulting parties or sects was headed by a grand lama. The most powerful of these princely priests was the Dalai-Lama, who had his headquarters at Kaldan, near Shasa. Lamaism is a corrupt form of Buddhism, and prevailed in Tibet, Mongolia, and a large part of Tartary. Its chief feature is the worship of Grand Lamas or Priests in whom Buddha is supposed to be incarnate. These Priest-Gods were very numerous and of unbounded influence.

Decrement (p. 73, l. 27).—Notice the unusual word. In what sense is it used?

Desultors (p. 96, l. 29).—Were men who, in the Roman Circus races, were accustomed to vault from one steed to another, when the horses were going at full speed.

Elizabeth Petrowna (p. 41, l. 27).—Was the second daughter of Peter the Great. She reigned from 1741 to 1762, and did much to advance the material prosperity of the country, although she was personally cruel and dissolute.

Fiesco (p. 36, l. 24).—Was one of the earlier tragedies of the great German poet Schiller.

French Retreat (p. 70, l. 17).—The invasion of Russia by Napoleon, in 1812, resembled, in many important details, the great barbaric invasions which took place in the earlier part of the Christian era. His vast army, of more than a quarter of a million of men, swept across the country like a tornado, destroying everything that came within their reach. The Tartars were not more merciless, nor the Huns more exultant in their power. But the tide turned at Moscow, and the story of their retreat is one of the saddest tales of suffering and privation that darken the pages of history.

Globes (p. 110, l. 7).—A globe was a body of troops drawn up in the form of a circle. This was a favorite formation with Roman generals. Cf. Milton; *Paradise Lost*; II, 512:

“Him round
A globe of fiery Seraphim, enclosed
With bright emblazonry and horrent arms.”

Hetman (p. 93, l. 2).—Was the title of the Chief or General of the Cossacks. Cf. the German *Hauptman*:

“The Ukraine’s Hetman, calm and bold,”
—Byron, *Mazeppa*.

Huns (p. 70, l. 10).—The Huns were a savage tribe of nomads who invaded Europe in the latter part of the fourth century. They came from the barren plateaus of Eastern Asia, and inspired terror as much by their horrible appearance as by their fierce and warlike nature.

For nearly a hundred years they menaced the peace and prosperity of Europe, but were finally subdued by the Roman general Aëtius in the battle of Chalons, 451 A. D.

Indorse (p. 103, l. 22).—The primary meaning of this word is *to cover the back of, to load or burden*.

“Elephants indorsed with towers.”

—*Paradise Regained*, III, 329.

Kalmucks—See page 28, No. 3.

Khan (p. 35, Title).—The word Khan, according to Rawlinson, is derived from the ancient root “Khak,” meaning a king, which appears in the Ethiopian *Tirhakah* and the Egyptian *Hyksos*.

Kien Long (p. 47, l. 17).—An ambitious and powerful monarch who reigned from 1735 to 1784. Unlike the majority of Chinese Emperors, he pursued a vigorous and aggressive policy, and made numerous invasions into neighboring countries. He had a wide reputation as a warlike ruler, and it was but natural that the Kalmucks should look to him for assistance, especially since, by so doing, they would turn their faces towards their ancestral home.

Kirghises—See page 30, No. 6.

Land of Promise (p. 88, l. 17).—Allusion is here made to the bondage of the Children of Israel in Egypt. The land of promise was Palestine, from which their ancestors had come, and to which they hoped to return.

Lemming (p. 35, l. 21).—“The Lemming is a rodent which inhabits the mountainous regions of Sweden and Norway. It is remarkable for migrating at certain periods, generally at the approach of winter, in immense multitudes, in a straight line, apparently in obedience to some blind mechanical impulse. They move onward in parallel columns, and nothing will induce them to

deviate from a straight line, the migration always terminating in the sea, and ending in the drowning of all who have survived the journey."—Nicholson's *Zoölogy*.

"Lion-ramp" (p. 45, l. 22).—Probably quoted from Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, line 139,—

"The bold Ascalonite
Fled from his lion-ramp."

Ramp is from the French *ramper*, meaning to *creep*. It may mean here the *lion-rage*.

Machiavelli (p. 41, l. 15).—Was a prominent Florentine statesman, who was born in 1469 and died in 1527. He was noted as a profound thinker, and as one of the greatest of Italian authors. He devoted all his time and energy to the welfare of his native city, and displayed great ability in the various governmental positions which he was called upon to fill. His name has come to be a synonym for all that is evil in public life, on account of a book which he wrote, in which he advocated principles which were singularly at variance with his character and practice. The book was entitled *Il Principe*. In it he seeks to show by what means a person may acquire and maintain tyrannical power over a community. The book is a purely scientific examination of the forces that come into play in the successful establishment of a strong and durable personal government; from which problem he eliminates all extraneous factors like the rights of the persons affected and the morality of the acts committed.

Miltonic Images (p. 36, l. 3).—The sublimest imagery, perhaps, in all literature is to be found in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Cf. I, 36-83; 169-191; II, 165-186. For the specific reference here, read the second book of *Paradise Lost*, especially the passage beginning with line 310.

Mongol-Tartar—See page 27, No. 2.

Monstrous (p. 45, l. 27).—Used in the sense of extraordinary, out of the natural order.

Muscovy (p. 45, l. 20).—An ancient name for Russia.

Official vouchers (p. 55, l. 28).—Note the peculiar use of this phrase.

Paladins (p. 53, l. 10).—The twelve warriors who formed the body-guard of Charlemagne were called Paladins. The name was afterwards applied to great warriors or champions, who were attached to the personal service of some emperor or king.

Pestilence (p. 71, l. 22).—The great plague in Athens began its ravages in 430 B. C., during the blockade of the city by the Spartans. All the space within the walls was crowded with the citizens and the refugees had sought safety from the foe, within the fortifications, only to meet an enemy tenfold more terrible and relentless. It is estimated that at least one-fourth of the entire population of the city perished.

The plague in London occurred in 1665, and was largely the result of the bad sanitary condition of the city. Above 100,000 people perished.

Roubles (p. 43, l. 16).—At this time, the Russian rouble was worth about 80 cents.

Russia and the Sultan (p. 51, l. 14).—The attempt of Russia to dismember Poland brought on a war in which the latter country found a strange champion in Turkey. But the Turkish army was wholly inefficient, and their resources soon became so nearly exhausted that Russia gained great advantages, and was able to dictate terms of peace. The war lasted from 1768 to 1774.

Sarepta (p. 60, l. 28).—Is a city in Moravia, near the great bend of the Volga.

Siege of Jerusalem (p. 72, l. 1).—In the siege and destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., referred to here, not less than one million Jews perished. Indeed, some authorities make the number much larger.

Steppes (p. 35, l. 6).—This name is applied to those extensive plains which stretch from the Dnieper across the southeastern part of European Russia, around the shores of the Caspian and Aral seas, and between the Altai and Ural chains. In the spring they are covered with verdure, but for the greater part of the year are barren and dry.

Tartar—See page 27, No. 1.

Terminus a quo and **terminus ad quem** (p. 35, l. 7).—Literally *the end from which*, and *the end to which*. The common words would be *the beginning* and *the end*. Is anything gained by the use of the Latin phrases? Is anything lost?

Translation (p. 46, l. 27).—Used in its literal sense as equivalent to transfer.

Trashed (p. 79, l. 11).—De Quincey himself says of this word that it was used by Beaumont and Fletcher in their *Bonduca* to describe the situation of a person retarded in flight or in pursuit by some incumbrance too important to be abandoned.

Turm (p. 110, l. 7).—Is from the Latin *turma*, and means a troop of horse.

Ukase (p. 53, l. 27).—Was an edict or order of the Russian government, having the force of law until annulled by a subsequent order.

Venice Preserved, or a Plot Discovered (p. 36 l. 24).—Was produced in 1682 by Thomas Otway, an almost forgotten dramatist. Edmund Gosse, in his

Seventeenth Century Studies, says: "There are few plays in existence so original and so telling in construction as this; the plot is in almost every respect worthy to be Shakespeare's."

Xerxes (p. 86, l. 26).—Herodotus tells us that, when Xerxes had gathered his great army for the invasion of Greece in Sardis, 480 B. C., he held a grand review. As he sat upon a hill-top and beheld the vast hordes filing by upon the plains below, he burst into tears, and wept bitterly at the thought that a hundred years from that time not one of the unnumbered hosts would be alive.

Yagers, or Jagers, (p. 102, l. 21).—Is from the German *jagen*, to hunt.

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De Quincey, Thomas
Revolt of the Tartars

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